







THE PAPACY IN POLITICS  
TO-DAY





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VATICAN PLOTS IN SPAIN  
AND OTHER COUNTRIES

BY

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LONDON:

WATTS & CO.,

5 & 6 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4

*First Published 1937*

Printed and Published in Great Britain by C. A. Watts & Co. Limited,  
5 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS second quarter of the twentieth century will one day inspire as large an historical literature as did the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In few ages has there been so swift and comprehensive a change. For a hundred years or so the race had made slow, unsteady, but in its totality unparalleled progress, and in the course of the last ten years we have seen this end in an appalling reaction. We have seen what we regarded as the worst evils of the Middle Ages return, almost as grim and robust as ever, and take their incongruous place among the scientific wonders of a new age.

But ten years ago we boasted that, in spite of the War and the years of confusion that followed, we kept the pace that our fathers had set. To-day we shudder at the monstrous shapes which darken civilization, and we discuss daily the chances of a world-disaster. The narrowest and most truculent nationalism mocks our dream of the brotherhood of nations. The standards of public conduct are borrowed from Macchiavelli. We have held fifty international conferences in twenty years and almost completely destroyed international faith and trust in the honour of statesmen. The right to personality and to freedom of discussion is derided over half of Europe, and education is starved or prostituted to base purposes. Jews suffer as they did in the vilest periods of the Middle Ages, and women lose all that they had won in fifty years of struggle. Armed forces assume such proportions, and are so deliberately equipped to

destroy peaceful cities, that it is as common to discuss the chances of the wreck of civilization as to wrangle over the problem of unemployment.

And the historian of the future will find it not the least remarkable feature of this degradation that a Church which poses as the supreme moral and spiritual authority on earth is allied everywhere with the forces of corruption. Mr. Belloc once genially asked me whether I did not, when on a country walk, look for a Jesuit behind every bush. Mr. H. G. Wells pictured me as a grim old Ironside lurking in an alley off Fleet Street for the first rumour of a Papist plot. But there is to-day no ground for these amiable reproaches. The Pope's political activity is not more modest and furtive than that of Signor Mussolini.

His Church is more intimately associated with the life of the Italian State than it has been with the life of any State for more than half a century; and it is not less intimately associated with the life of the Austrian or the Polish State. We have the repeated assurances of General Franco that the Fascist regime which he hopes to establish in Spain will be distinguished from all other such regimes by its reliance upon and intimate co-operation with the Church. The entire Press has told us recently how the Pope, in a public declaration at Rome and then through the bishops of Germany, has begged Hitler to accept his co-operation; and, since he especially desires to co-operate in "the destruction of Bolshevism in Russia, Spain, and Mexico," he not only endorses Hitler's plan to conquer and exploit Russia, but he plainly promises the influence of his Church in Poland and the United States. We have, in fine, a recent announcement in the Press that Japan, which almost lay beyond the Pope's purview in its gentle artistic days,

is, now that it takes first rank amongst the aggressive nations, to have an ambassador at the Vatican and a Papal Legate at Tokio.

These facts would suffice of themselves to dispose us to study the share of Papal policy in the degeneration of our age. It is just in those countries—Italy, Spain, Austria, Poland, Germany, and Japan—which we regard as the chief sources of the infection that the Pope exercises, or seeks to exercise, most influence. And the force that impels the Vatican to embark upon a policy which the historian of the future may find revolting is not obscure.

In 1909 I showed in my *Decay of the Church of Rome* that the Papacy had lost about 100,000,000 followers in the course of the preceding hundred years: in the sense that, if it had kept all the descendants of the Catholics of the early nineteenth century, it would count 100,000,000 followers more than it honestly could in 1909. My conclusion, which was supported by Catholic authorities for the greater part of the loss, was generally accepted, and the Church began to construct a very elaborate and industrious organization to check the loss and increase the inflow of converts. The zeal of the laity was enlisted, and all sorts of covertly-acting groups and societies were formed to promote Catholic interests in the Press, the library, the publisher's office, the bookseller's shop, the political organization, the school, the B.B.C., and so on. We shall see some remarkable details later. Yet the Vatican not only recovered no ground in what had been known as Catholic countries and made no progress beyond what the growth of population gave it in England and the United States: in twenty years it suffered a further loss of about 50,000,000 adherents.

Readers who are unaware what censorship controls our

papers and other publications are apt to be startled by such assertions, but they will easily see, on reflection, that, while the chronic leakage from the Church continued, the outflow was swollen to the dimensions of a torrent by the rapid advance after the War of Communism and Socialism in Europe and Latin America. The extraordinary shrinkage of the Catholic vote and expansion of the voting strength of bodies which the Church drastically condemned is just a matter of official statistics that may be read anywhere. We shall confirm the evidence in other ways, but these statistics themselves plainly show that the Roman Church was rapidly foundering in Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, and some of the larger Latin-American Republics; while it has, notoriously, almost disappeared from Russia. We cannot evade the conclusion that in less than twenty years after 1917 the Church, in spite of its militant organizations and the political intrigues which we shall describe, lost something like 50,000,000 members; and it owed this mainly, though by no means entirely, to the propaganda of Socialism, Communism, and Syndicalism.

And just when the Vatican realized that it could not save its empire from the devastating inroads of these Goths and Vandals, as it conceives them, it saw the politico-economic opposition to them take the form of Fascism. We have here nothing to do with the clash of political theories. What concerns us solely is the fact that the Roman Church now allied itself everywhere with an element which had begun with vulgar brawls and the sordid use of castor-oil and has gradually engendered those evils which make so many wonder if the race is not entering upon a new Middle Ages. The alliance was not at all as unnatural as some may be disposed to think. The law of the Church—the esoteric law which is kept

under the veil of a dead language, not that which is proudly exhibited in the vernacular—is, we shall see, as harsh, intolerant, even sanguinary, as the code of any other dictatorship, and, wherever circumstances permitted it, the Church blended its policy of truculent intolerance with the similar policy of princes right down to the present century. Spain was the last area in which it could still follow its mediæval policy, and that is why we see a more horrible reaction, with a more overtly ecclesiastical character, in Spain than anywhere else. But the same policy, modulated according to the conditions, may be traced all over the world, as will be shown in the following chapters.





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## CHAPTER I

### WHY SPANIARDS HATE THE CHURCH

**I**N 1924, during the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, I travelled over the greater part of Spain. \_ I had for twenty years taken a close interest in the country and was fully aware that Church, Throne, and Army had made this boorish and sensual soldier the master of Spain in order to prevent the publication of a sordid scandal, over the Moroccan War, which threatened to expose all three to the fury of the nation. In England the Press, literature, and the cinema were used to convey an entirely false picture of Spain under its clerical-military dictatorship, but I found a nation, one of the most courteous and most attractive in the world, one that had already sacrificed a hundred thousand lives in a peaceful struggle for freedom and enlightenment, sullen and cowering under the eyes of a vast army of spies, armed police, and soldiers. Thus I was fully prepared for the outflame of the Spanish people in 1931, and I hastened to interpret it to the public (*Spain in Revolt*). Yet such was our tradition of suppressing facts at Catholic dictation that there were in the press in London at the time of the Revolution two works which, in the familiar way, depicted the people of Spain devoted to their Church and Throne and severed from a feverish Europe by their tranquil docility and piety.

The springs of the tragic vitality that throbs in Spain to-day are in the period of the French Revolution, and,

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although in this study we will confine ourselves as far as possible to recent years, a retrospective glance is indispensable in the case of Spain. We must, in fact, if we would correctly understand the protestations of the rebels of to-day and the share of the Church in their revolt, glance at a still earlier period than that of the sanguinary struggle for democracy. It is one of the ironic features of our age that we have given ears to hear—education—to all our people, and we have devised a system of communicating news and truths to them that is as wonderful as our atom-splitting apparatus, yet in my fifty years of adult life I have never known our organs of public instruction to be so inaccurate as they are to-day on such themes as this which we are here discussing. In the case of the present struggle in Spain there are other interests than those of the Church enlisted in the work of suppression and misrepresentation, but there are certain flagrant untruths in circulation for which the Church is peculiarly responsible. We must, by a brief digression into the history of the country, remove these before we can understand the activity and aims of the Roman Church to-day.

### § 1. *The Historic Tragedy*

When General Franco seemed to be successfully encircling Madrid he issued, *urbi et orbi*, an elegant and dignified statement of his aims. While his uncouth and pious lieutenant in Seville, General Queipo de Llano, was, to his disgust, raucously assuring Spain on the wireless that they intended "to pound up the flesh and blood of the Communists as mortar for the rebuilding of the churches," General Franco, or whoever composed his manifesto, adopted the tone of a Catholic professor. He was going to restore in Spain the brilliant and prosperous

days of Ferdinand and Isabella, of Charles I and Philip II. He vaguely assured the Spanish workers that the old traditions would be adapted to modern conditions. Catholic capital would co-operate justly and amicably with Catholic labour under the serene guidance of the Church. But the chief aim was to restore the grandeur, the serenity, the solidity of Spain as it had been under the Castilian monarchs. Spanish Fascism was to be unlike any other Fascism. It was to be supremely Catholic.

Our most cultivated dailies and weeklies applauded this programme with a dignity that seemed as ecclesiastical as the manifesto itself. What a noble contrast the picture presented to the Spain of to-day and yesterday, torn and ravaged by the Reds! Yet there must here and there have been a reader even in England who knew that in history the Castilian dynasty is notorious as one which brought upon its kingdom as utter a ruin as any line of monarchs ever wrought. We can understand how a Spanish general could see no irony in his claim, for historical education in Spanish Catholic colleges is a burlesque. But that some of our leading newspapers should use this manifesto as a means of reconciling their readers to the horrors of the war, and that no writer should warn the public that this was just a painful indication of what Papal rule in the new Spain would mean, is remarkable. In Spain the proclamation was greeted with derision.

But is it not an equally notorious fact that Spain, the Spain of Lope de Vega and Calderon, of Velasquez and Murillo, had a superb civilization in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries? Undoubtedly. What I say is not that it had not this period of prosperity and splendour, but that these Castilian monarchs were, and

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in proportion as they took their inspiration from the Church, precisely the men who wrecked it. The most stubbornly reactionary forces could not have prevented Spain from enjoying at least a century of prosperity and high culture. This was not merely because it inevitably shared the Renaissance of Europe generally. It had the advantage above all other countries of taking over an immensely rich and advanced civilization—that of the Arabs.

As I have shown in my *Splendour of Moorish Spain*, nearly five centuries before Ferdinand and Isabella little more than half the country sustained a population of 30,000,000 people, and in such prosperity and well-ordered civilization that any one of ten of their cities could have bought up the whole of the rest of Europe. Catholic Spain inherited this; and just at the time when it took over the last Arab kingdom, Granada, it inherited also, owing to the advance of the Turks, the navigating skill and daring of Genoa and Venice, and appropriated all the gold of America. And it was the Catholic monarchs of the Castilian dynasty—nay, it was precisely their Catholicism—that made Spain in less than two hundred years a desolation in which six or seven million pathetically ignorant people browsed like their goats upon the ruined land.

The facts are as placidly accepted in history as the battles of the Civil War, and I need merely take a few points from Lord Acton's *Cambridge Modern History*, our highest authority. Isabella died, heartbroken, in 1504. Her daughter was insane, and her grandson, the Emperor Charles I, inherited the kingdom and Isabella's fanaticism. General Franco's allusion to him is as humorous as if one were to count Richard the Lion-Heart as one of the makers of England. He wasted his life and the wealth

of Spain—"his actions were not inspired by any regard for the interests of Spain," the historian says—in combating Protestantism in the north, and Spaniards saw little of him. As to the "glorious" reign of Philip II that followed, the historian says of it: "In it the vices of his father's policy were displayed to the fullest extent." Even English writers who are not historians may have heard of the Armada and of the Revolt (spread over forty years of exhaustive struggle) of the Netherlands. He died in 1598; and in 1619 the Royal Council reported to his son, Philip III, "a foolish trifler," that the country was in ruins. His successors were selfish sensualists, and Spain sank rapidly into moral and intellectual degradation and deep poverty.

When General Franco's troops first approached Madrid, one of our organs of public instruction told its readers with what joy the Moors beheld their ancient city. It is bad enough to confuse the barbarians whom the rebels enlisted in Africa with the superb Arabs of the so-called Moorish civilization of mediæval Spain, but any good encyclopædia would have informed the writer that Madrid had been merely a military post in a desolate region until the sixteenth century, and that its hectic splendour then lasted only about a hundred years. Under the Arabs the mass of the people had been prosperous, generally educated, and lightly taxed. Under the Christian monarchs the schools were destroyed, the taxes were doubled, and the roots of trade and industry were cut by the expulsion of the Jews and Moors. There was still much wealth, and to it was added the loot of Peru and Mexico; and it was all sucked to Madrid and absorbed by the palace, the grandees, and the Church. There was a blaze of silk and steel and jewels, a brilliant gathering of artists, dramatists, and architects. And it



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was all over in a century. It was in the year after the birth of Murillo that the Council declared Spain ruined. Before he died Madrid had lost half its population, and 20,000 beggars infested its shabby streets. In another century the population of the entire country had sunk to 6,000,000, and it was almost the poorest land in Europe. This was the monument of the Castilian dynasty and their Church.

It is important to understand that the people of Spain know this to-day. In rural districts, where the schools are controlled by the Church, the fairy-tale of a glorious Castilian civilization succeeding some vaguely disreputable "Moorish" life still lingers. But it was expelled from all but Catholic colleges in the last century, and, as the urban workers got schools in this century—Spain was still illiterate to the extent of 68 per cent. in 1909—they avidly devoured the works of the liberal historians. After 1931, when the democratic government created a very fine system of education, the truth became generally known. These Castilian monarchs whom they had been taught to venerate had ruined Spain, and it was the influence of the Church on them which had made them destroy the roots of prosperity by suppressing the Jewish merchants and the Moorish craftsmen and waste the vast wealth they had inherited in religious wars or heap it upon the clergy and the monks. That is the first point in the Spanish nation's indictment of its Church; and it is the first point in the Church's indictment of the democrats that they have enlightened the people in these matters.

### § 2. *The Red Church of the Nineteenth Century*

The second point is far worse; worse in its measurement of the undisputed guilt of the Church, worse in the appalling sufferings which were inflicted upon the people.

And, curiously enough, this second part of the historical truth about the Spanish people and their Church is just as falsely travestied in our literature as is the first part. Certainly four-fifths of the English people are under the impression that the use of cruelty in a political struggle began in recent times with the rise of various bodies of the workers who are lumped together as "the Reds." They are, therefore, disposed to believe that the rebels will render a service to the Spanish people by destroying this minority of Sadists—as Sir Philip Gibbs has stooped to call them in a Sunday paper—and that the firm discipline which must be imposed will be tempered by the traditional refinement of the Catholic aristocrat and the clemency of the Catholic Church.

This—and the majority of the Spanish people know it to-day—is a gross historical untruth. If I summarize the facts, the undisputed facts, the reader may judge if my expression is not temperate. Since 1812, when the Spanish people first rejected absolute monarchy, to 1931, there were six popular revolutions for the establishment of democracy and three counter-revolutions in which the Church and the Throne recovered power. The six democratic victories, most of which were won (as in 1931) without fighting, were followed by no reprisals, but the two royalist victories of 1814 and 1822 were followed by such savage reprisals that more than 50,000 unarmed men, women, youths, and girls (mostly of the middle and educated class) lost their lives on the scaffold, in massacres, or in foetid jails and penal colonies, while several hundred thousand suffered ruin, exile, or years of imprisonment. All this may be read in the *Cambridge Modern History*. Therefore the historical truth is exactly the reverse of the version that has recently been imposed upon the majority of our people. *It is that savagery is*

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*the established tradition of the clerical-aristocratic forces in Spain, and that until this year the people have never, even in their greatest triumphs and in spite of the red record of their opponents, been accused of resorting to these vile reprisals.*

To this general statement there is one exception. At every popular victory from 1812 onward churches and monasteries have been burned, and on some of these occasions a few monks and priests have been killed. These were never official reprisals, and every effort was made by the democratic authorities to check them. But it must intrigue even the most reluctant reader that the one form of reprisal after a democratic victory was always directed against the Church. In 1931, an English resident in Spain assured me, it looked as if the workers would destroy all the urban churches and convents in Spain but for the energetic action of the authorities, and they had been just as eager to burn churches a hundred years earlier. The pretence that it is only in recent times that they have been inflamed against the Church by radical literature is a constructive untruth. They had burned far more churches and had killed a number of the clergy and monks in 1824, when 90 per cent. of them could not read.

There is, in fact, a confession of very grave historical ignorance in the claim, which is now repeated on every side, that the people or "the mob" indulge in violence and cruelty whenever the restraints of higher statesmanship and religion are suspended. Look, one reads almost every day, at the excesses of the French and Russian Revolutions! Of the Russian Revolution, which was unique in its conditions, we shall see a little in a later chapter.<sup>1</sup> The popular idea of the horrors of the French

<sup>1</sup> It will enforce my argument if I make one point here. One of the most widely-circulated histories of the Russian Revolution, that of Lancelot Lawton, says that the Bolsheviks killed 8050

Revolution is based upon films and stories. The facts are now accepted in all serious history. In the September Massacres only 1100, more than half of whom were criminals or prostitutes from the jails, were killed, and the horrors were perpetrated by a few hundred workers at a time when the Roman Church was still established. In the Reign of Terror we have 17,000 specific cases of execution, but less than one-tenth of the victims were priests or aristocrats, and the great majority were revolutionaries of the working-class. The *Cambridge History* says that it is "ludicrous" to suggest that more than a few thousands of the half-million people of Paris were responsible. The author might, however, have made the further point, which turns the modern use of this "awful example" into an absurdity, that the one man who was supremely and notoriously responsible, Robespierre, was a cultivated middle-class lawyer with a most emphatic belief in God: a man who denounced atheism fiercely on the ground that it was "aristocratic."

But there is an even graver untruth in this scandalous and quite general attempt to represent that all the outrages during a revolution or civil war are on the side of the people, especially if they discard religion. Between the French and the Russian Revolutions there have been more than twenty major revolutions and counter-revolutions in Europe. In 1848 alone seven revolutions shook princes from their thrones and gave power to the people, and in 1849 the position was reversed. And what I said of Spain applies, almost without exception, to the whole

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ecclesiastics, including 1275 archbishops and bishops. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* and the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* both tell us that there were only 169 archbishops and bishops (including retired) in Russia; and even these were not all killed. We shall see that the Pope later attempted to become friendly with this terrible Soviet Government.

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of these ! The victories of the people were not followed by reprisals : the victories of their rulers and Churches were invariably followed by reprisals in which tens of thousands were killed, often with revolting brutality, and a far larger number were ruined or imprisoned, with torture, in the vilest of jails. And these reprisals were marked with savagery and appalling bloodshed *only in Roman Catholic countries* and Orthodox Catholic Russia. In Spain, Portugal, France, the Kingdom of Naples, the Papal States, and Austria-Hungary about 400,000 men, women, youths, and girls who had never taken arms and did not as a rule call for the abolition of royalty or the disestablishment of the Church were savagely done to death by combined Church and State between the French and the Russian Revolutions. The tradition of savagery is on the clerical-aristocratic side. Yet so lamentable is the instruction of the public to-day that, though we all still remember the completely peaceful revolution in Spain in 1931 and the horrors perpetrated upon the workers after their revolt in 1934, this historic truth about the use of cruelty is turned into the exact opposite.

I have given the details in my *Spain in Revolt*. Ferdinand VII, after a solemn promise to observe the Constitution, broke into an orgy of savagery, which was directed by the Papal Nuncio and the confessor of Don Carlos. Six years later the people carried a bloodless revolution, without reprisals, and the King, one of the most sordid monarchs in Europe, now, in the presence of the clergy, swore a solemn oath to observe the Constitution. He then fled to France, and from the Catholic monarch of that country got a powerful army and returned. Not only did the Church absolve him from his oath, but his confessor, Canon Saez, organized the reprisals, and the clergy everywhere urged the people to exterminate the

liberals. In one year many thousands were killed, often very barbarously, 44,000 were lodged in the jails, 20,000 were exiled, and about 100,000 were deprived of office and exiled to the provinces. Of the guilt of the clergy, Major Hume, one of the highest authorities, says in his *Modern Spain* (p. 256) :

Modern civilization has seen no such instance of brutal, blind ferocity as that which followed the arrival of Ferdinand at Madrid. There was neither justice nor mercy in the government of the besotted churchmen who surrounded the King. The gallows was the sole instrument and argument by which they ruled; they prayed for the restoration of the Inquisition, though that Ferdinand dare not grant. The frenzy of intolerance and cruelty spread from the preaching friars and ignorant nobles to the brutal mob. It was sufficient for a person to have belonged to the militia, or even to be related to a known liberal, for the most inhuman tortures to be inflicted on him by the unrestrained populace, and in many cases even women were subjected to disgraceful treatment by the mob and the royalist volunteers. The authorities, far from discouraging, smiled upon the brutal orgies of these supporters of despotism. It is a lamentable truth that much of the atrocities of this persecution was owing to the influence of the friars and the Church. A hideous ecclesiastical society, founded by the Bishop of Osuma and called "The Exterminating Angel," which spread its ramifications all over Spain, organized vengeance upon liberals: every pulpit, every monastery, every royalist club was a centre of persecution.

The *Cambridge History* and every other authoritative history agrees. The one point on which Catholic writers seriously protest is about the existence of the Society of the Exterminating Angel, but there is abundant contemporary evidence of it. "Hardly a town in Spain," Hume says, "was not disgraced by cruelty worthy of a Nero"; and of the chief organizer in Madrid he says

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that "not even the most bloodthirsty wretches of the French Reign of Terror could surpass this man" (p. 263). The orgy of brutality continued for three years, and the very pious Count de España, who presided over its last phase, "surpassed all previous efforts in his heartless cruelty."

When Ferdinand died, the Church plunged the country into the horrors of the Carlist War, but the people recovered power, and a less harsh regime, a "tyranny tinged with democracy," began. Still, whenever a Conservative statesman held the reins there was severe persecution; and the growing body of Liberals were not moderated in their hostility to the Church when they saw the hierarchy induce the Pope to grant the Golden Rose, the Church's supreme reward of virtuous womanhood, to Queen Isobel, who was the most openly immoral princess in the world. The *Cambridge History* does not lightly impugn monarchs for such matters, but it observes here that "the simple-hearted Pius IX had amazed and amused the diplomatists of Europe by bestowing on her the Golden Rose in recognition of her virtue."<sup>1</sup> The Spanish hierarchy, who applauded, if they had not procured, this travesty of religion, supported this completely selfish and voluptuous woman, who made no concealment of her long series of lovers from her seventeenth year to near the end of her life, in a renewed persecution of Liberals and anti-clericals.

### § 3. *The Revolution of 1931*

The Revolution of 1854 put an end to the old form of persecution, and Liberals now began to alternate in office with the Conservatives. The middle class had won its

<sup>1</sup> Vol. XI, p. 568; the writer of this was a Catholic.

freedom to discuss religion, and became predominantly anti-clerical. Unfortunately, the massive illiteracy of the people encouraged political corruption, in both parties, until in Spain it became so blatant that a few days *before* a certain election a Madrid newspaper was able to steal and publish the results of the polling! Alfonso XII naturally proved as selfish and licentious as his mother, and the Church remained serenely indifferent to the whole corruption. It was therefore inevitable that, as the workers got some education, a new phase of the struggle against the Church and State should begin, and that masses of the workers should declare political life hopelessly tainted and turn, on the Russian model, to anarchism. Many intellectuals agreed with them in this and understood anarchism in the pacific Tolstoyan sense, but they were all equally opposed to Church and State, and Church and State reacted with the customary truculence.

I have in my *Martyrdom of Ferrer* fully described, quoting one Catholic authority after another, the almost incredible condition of Spain in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of this century, and I must refer the reader to it. But it is the prelude to what has happened in Spain since 1930, and the grossest mistakes are made by ignoring it. For instance, I showed unchallengeable evidence that torture—in some cases obscene torture—was officially used in Spanish jails in the early years of this century, yet we have writer after writer now saying that cruelty is something to which the amiable Spanish character has stooped only since the spread of Communism and Anarcho-Syndicalism. Vileness of this sort, I have now shown, has been the practice of the King's or Government's servants ever since 1814; and the Church fully approved, for it is



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just a continuation of the practices of the Spanish Inquisition.

Professor Simarro, of Madrid University, wrote a very large work on the judicial murder in 1909 of Francisco Ferrer (*El Proceso Ferrer*), and he fully and expressly endorsed (quoting a score of pages of my book) my proof that Ferrer was innocent, and that the Church had openly egged on the Government to execute him. This applies to most of the horrors of the time. My friend Professor Tarrida del Marmol, a scholar of aristocratic Spanish family, was imprisoned in the vile dungeons of Montjuich and later sentenced to death mainly because he was an active Rationalist. But the scandalous shooting of Ferrer roused the conscience of the world—my lectures on it in Australia induced the Federal Government to send an inquiry (which was ignored) to Madrid—and the struggle relaxed until the gross scandals of the war in Morocco excited a dangerous agitation in the country, and the King, politicians, and Church made General Primo de Rivera Dictator. If any man professes to be sceptical about the share of the Church, he will find on inquiry that during the Dictatorship the appropriations for civil purposes fell from 44,000,000 to 37,000,000 pesetas, for education from 37,000,000 to 33,000,000, yet the appropriations for the clergy rose from 62,000,000 to 68,000,000, though the Church already sweated wealth at every pore and the country was almost beggared. But we shall see presently what the bishops said and what the people thought about them.

I observed on the first page that authors and journalists, mostly Catholics, conspired to give this country an assurance that the Spaniards were happy and prosperous under General de Rivera. The amazing thing is that, in spite of the appalling exposure of the Dictator by Spain's most

brilliant writer, Blasco Ibañez, and in spite of the overwhelming verdict of the country on the King and his Dictators, some still venture to praise that gross and inept usurpation. In his recently published work, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1936), Professor E. A. Peers sourly rebukes the writers who, far away from Spain, said that the people were "mute under the tyranny." He quotes from my *Spain in Revolt*. But instead of telling his readers that I had seen this with my own eyes, for I travelled from Irun to Cordova, he goes on to make the very misleading remark that "everybody who travelled there between 1923 and 1929 knows well that the country showed every outward sign of prosperity and happiness" (p. 5); which implies that I had not travelled there. I repeat that, especially in Madrid, I saw the people cowed under a sour and monstrous regiment of armed police, guards, and soldiers. Several editors were arrested during the month I spent there, and leading papers appeared almost daily with blacked-out spaces. As to the prosperity and happiness, there were conspiracies, chiefly of high officers and the intellectuals, discovered every year. Count Romanones, the Liberal leader, was fined 500,000 pèsetas, and General Aguilera, ex-Minister of War, and Sanchez Guerra, ex-Premier (Conservative), were arrested for conspiracy. Madrid University was closed because of the violent insurgence of students—many were shot—and professors, and, as the finances became desperate, the King had to save himself by dismissing De Rivera and trying another Dictator.

But it is the final phase that most discredits these Conservative-clerical sophistications of Spanish history. Professor Peers closes his eulogy of the Dictatorship by describing how the "happy" country seethed with revolution in 1930, and how at the municipal elections of April,

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1931, when the chief issue before the country was the abolition of royalty and disestablishment of the Church, the allied Republicans and Socialists won so decisive a victory that their leaders at once compelled the King to abdicate. Wherever possible the customary electoral corruption was used. Professor Peers admits that "there might be gerrymandering here and there, and perhaps in the country districts on a large scale." But the cities voted decisively. The Republican-Socialist alliance, supported by the great body of the intellectuals, won 90,000 votes against 30,000 in Madrid, and 90,000 against 28,000 in Barcelona. At the parliamentary election, which followed in June, this vote was, in spite of the strenuous activity of the clergy, just as strongly reaffirmed. Only one monarchist candidate was elected, and the reactionaries of all shades found themselves a negligible remnant in the new Cortes. From that day the Church began to prepare the campaign which has led to the barbaric development of 1936.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VATICAN AND THE SPANISH REBELLION

THE struggle in Spain has changed its character in the last five years with the growth of the Anarchist, Syndicalist, and Communist bodies of the workers, but we shall have no difficulty in following here the single issue which we are studying : the action of the Church and the attitude of the people towards it. As far as the purpose of this book is concerned the change merely means that, whereas the Church had for a century and a quarter sought defence against the growing hostility by an alliance with royal power, it now allied itself with economic power and Fascism. The chief aspect of this which concerns us here is that it is commonly represented that the new or popular bodies, who to a man (and woman) rejected the Roman Church, exhibited such a degeneration of character that in its new campaign the Church was rendering a high social service to Spain.

It was necessary to premise an historical chapter in order to enable the reader to attain a sound judgment on this matter. Few doubt that in the present struggle, which is in a very real sense a war of extermination, outrages beyond the ordinary practices of war have been committed on both sides. But the man who knows nothing—and few seem to know anything to-day—about the century of fierce struggle which has culminated in the present horror cannot see events in proper perspective. Until the year 1936 the Spanish people had a

remarkable record of restraint in hours of triumph. In 1931 they had a memory of the sordid reprisals that had been taken upon them ever since 1814—of the 50,000 unarmed martyrs of their cause, and the appalling volume of suffering that had been inflicted upon them—yet they behaved nobly. That the only outrages some of them committed in their triumph were against the Church is significant enough. Modern readers are not much impressed by the Catholic claim that the devil inspired them to do this injury to the institution he hated most.

We have, on the contrary, seen that it was because the Church which professed mercy and unselfish service had throughout supported and encouraged the most selfish and most brutal monarchs. General Franco was wise at least in not claiming that he was going to restore the glories of the *Bourbon* dynasty. Every member of that dynasty since Waterloo except Alfonso XII (who escaped the fate by dying before he was thirty) was, sooner or later, ignominiously driven out of Spain by his people. Ferdinand VII was not unlike Nero in his cruelties and dissipations, as all historians admit, yet the Church cordially co-operated in his worst crimes. His daughter and successor, Isobel II, astonished all Europe by the open licence of her conduct and her voluptuous selfishness and frivolity, yet the Church gave her the Golden Rose. Her son Alfonso XII lived—again no historian questions it—in the same undisguised licence, and died of consumption after a reign of ten years; but the Church was never more richly rewarded than during those ten years. Alfonso XIII reintroduced the reign of terror and ended with the customary violation of his solemn oath; and the Church again drew immense profit by supporting him. If we bear in mind also that the Church was very

gravely responsible for the backward condition of education—in 1909 two-thirds of the people were still illiterate, and the average wage of teachers (who often did not get this) was about 8s. 6d. a week—we understand how after the elections of 1931 the Roman Church in Spain knew that it faced the day of reckoning.

### § 1. *Intrigues of the Church*

Church and Throne were still in power when the municipal elections of 1931 were held, and in Spain they had a sixty-years' tradition of falsifying electoral returns, yet the people gave overwhelming power to a coalition which openly announced that it was going to abolish royalty and disestablish the Church. In the cities, or among the educated Spaniards, three out of four, the voting showed, endorsed this policy; and the proportion did not change at the ensuing parliamentary election. So the Church and the Vatican got to work at once. Cardinal Segura, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of the Spanish Church, issued a pastoral letter in which he declared that the election was a triumph of "the enemies of the kingdom of Jesus Christ" and urged the faithful to "prepare to fight." The Spanish people responded with such a burst of indignation that he fled to Rome; and the Pope supported him in his attitude, refusing to receive the new ambassador who was appointed by the Spanish Government. The other heads of the Spanish Church, the Archbishops of Seville, Valencia, and Tarragona, declared their adhesion to their chief, and some of the bishops went even farther. The Church had declared war against the new Government, and it affronted the majority of educated Spaniards by insinuating that their deliberate verdict, matured during months of discussion,

had been dictated to them by a small minority (as the bishops would claim) of "enemies of Christ."

It was quite natural that the Vatican and the Spanish prelates should rouse their people against the Government's proposals; just as natural as that the Government should insist on carrying out the mandate which the majority of the nation had given them. But writers who dilate shudderingly on the conduct of "the mob" in burning churches and do not mention the provocation, to say nothing of the preceding hundred years, do not behave honourably. Any person who cares to go through the 1931 file of the *Times* will find that no outrages occurred until twenty-seven days after the election. It was an amazing instance of restraint after a victory over a decade of tyranny. The firing of churches and convents, though no lives were lost—I have photographs of the workers helping aged priests and nuns out of the premises—then spread over Spain, and the Vatican ordered submission. The general election followed, as I said, and the Republican Alliance (Liberals) won 145 seats, the Socialists 114, the Radical-Socialists 56. Opponents of the Government of all shades had only 121 deputies. The Church had completely failed after two months of passionate agitation, and the Government set out to embody in a new Constitution the anti-clerical measures it had invited the country to endorse.

In the course of the debates on the religious clauses of the draft Constitution Señor Azaña said that Spain "had ceased to be a Catholic country." To our professors of Spanish literature, whose eyes are buried in mediæval mystic works, this is only one of the follies uttered in a year of excitement. The folly is theirs. No Catholic could support even such a measure as the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church,

and this was not the worst blow. Full religious liberty was granted for the first time in the history of Spain. All religious orders which exacted a vow of obedience were to be dissolved—this especially meant the suppression of the Jesuits—and their property nationalized, the proceeds to be used for “educative and charitable purposes.” Civil marriage and divorce were enacted, and no religious orders (monks or nuns) were to take part, as they had hitherto done, in trade, industry, or education. Professor Peers sums up the effect of the new clauses as “the Church disestablished and disendowed, the Religious Orders crippled, and the Society of Jesus under sentence of expulsion from the country,” yet he finds that the debates brought out “the essentially religious character of the Spaniard.” It is amazing. These clauses, which the Spanish Church week by week denounced as inspired by the devil and knew to be deadly to itself, were carried by the representatives of the Spanish people by majorities of, in the end, more than five to one. The Church was losing Spain—had already lost the great majority in the cities.

And the loss meant more to the Vatican and the Spanish hierarchy than English people realize. The Spanish Church was, in proportion to the resources of the country, the richest in the world. Mgr. José Veleza de Gunjado, a priest-critic of the idle monks, estimated that the monks and nuns held two-thirds of what money there was in the country and one-third of the landed property. One Jesuit house had an income of £15,000 a year, and the treasure accumulated in the older churches was enormous. One statue of the Virgin at Toledo had a crown worth £5000, bracelets worth £2000, and robes sewn with more than 150,000 pearls, diamonds, and other jewels, while peasants worked the fields for 3s. 6d. a week. But one



instance of the peculiarly privileged position of the Catholic Church in Spain will suffice. It continued the sale of indulgences (*bulas*) which the Church had been forced centuries ago to abandon elsewhere. There were four different *bulas*: two granting "indulgences," one giving permission to eat meat on the days when the English Catholic must fast, and one, the weirdest of all, granting a thief a right to keep ill-gotten property if he did not know the name of the owner (as, of course, no pickpocket does). These egregious documents cost from about sixpence to a shilling each, and before the War were sold in the ordinary way of trade by the booksellers. My exposure of this incredible traffic in England in 1908, to the consternation of English Catholics, led to a change. They were still sold in the shops in 1911—my *bulas* bear that date—but I was told in Madrid in 1924 that the sale was then confined to the priests. The Vatican authorized the Spanish Church to reissue them every year, and a herald proclaimed this on the streets, but the proportion of the proceeds that went to Rome is not known.

The educated Spain which the Church faced in 1931 was bent on sweeping away all these disgraces of the country, and refused any longer to pay in addition nearly 20,000,000 pesetas a year out of public funds to the clergy. This sum was twice what had hitherto been spent upon education. Now a vast sum was devoted to education, and the system of purely secular schools, of all ranks, that was rapidly constructed won the admiration of pedagogists all over the world. Thousands of foreign students and professors went to Spain each year. The mere codification of the new Government's scheme of education occupies 100 pages in Marcelino Domingo's *La Escuela en la Republica*. But this is not the place to describe all the excellent work that the Republic did.

It is enough that its scheme to build 27,000 new schools for the workers, more than half of whom were still illiterate in 1931, was regarded by the Church as a grave menace. With secular marriage and divorce, secular funerals, secular schools, and secularized courts, the half or less of Spain that remained loyal to the Church would crumble away. The inauguration of the first President had struck the new note. For the first time in the history of Spain the oath of loyalty of the head of the State ignored God and the clergy.

### § 2. *The Revolt of 1934*

For two years and a half the republican Government did admirable constructive work in the face of formidable difficulties. Anarchists and Syndicalists disdain all central government, and the Communists—who, by the way, are much less numerous and much more respectable in Spain than most people imagine—joined them in attacking a Government that had such a very temperate economic programme. They hampered the Government as much as possible. More serious was the action of the Liberal leader Lerroux. Spanish friends of mine who had been colleagues of Lerroux in the fighting days of 1890 to 1910 had spoken of him in the highest terms, but his weakness or defection is gravely responsible for the tragic development. We have not here to judge whether his conduct was due to honest fear of Socialism, ambition to become the supreme leader, or (as all Madrid believes to-day) bribery by the Catholic leader Gil Robles. His conduct enormously helped the Catholics and prepared the way for the revolt.

Lerroux, who led the largest party in the republican alliance, soon withdrew from the Government, and left it

to deal with the extremists of both sides. When it dealt very severely with Anarcho-Syndicalist agitators yet showed great leniency in dealing with the organizers of a Catholic military revolt—not a single general or officer was shot—it doubtless sustained the tradition of Spanish humanitarianism, but it gained no credit abroad and intensified its difficulties at home. The extremists attacked it more angrily, and the Catholics responded to its leniency with a new and more insolent campaign. It was, as I said, part of the Vatican's new policy everywhere to enlist the services of the laity. The movement, which began in Italy, was at first condemned and regarded as a dangerous weakening of the rigid line between the docile laity and the supernaturally-endowed priesthood. The alarming losses in every country forced the Papacy to change its policy, and in country after country the more fanatical of the laymen were drafted into militant groups under the name of Catholic Action or Popular Action.

This brought to the front the sinister and robust figure of Gil Robles, a Catholic with all the fanaticism of Jesuit education—the defrocked Jesuits were unfortunately not compelled to leave Spain—the vigour of youth, and the burly unscrupulousness of a certain type of newspaper-proprietor. His regiment of Fascist—Jesuitically he rejects that name—youths worked on the familiar lines, and his paper reeked with bravado and mendacity. Yet the anti-Catholic clauses were in the end voted into the new Constitution by 278 votes to 50, and the verdict of the people was again invited in a general election to the Cortes (November, 1933). The mixed parties of the Right now got 207 seats, the Centre 167, the Left 99.

But the writers who represent this as an indication that the Church had recovered a good deal of ground gravely deceive their readers. Certainly the growing

power of Socialism and Anarcho-Syndicalism—the Communists had had only one deputy—had alarmed many republicans and caused them to withdraw support from the Radical leader Azaña, but there were two special reasons. The Government had been very slow in partitioning land amongst the peasants, and these now sent 150 deputies (the Agrarians) to see to their interests. The modest real advance made by the Catholics and Monarchists was due to a factor that is usually concealed. The Radical-Socialists were so convinced that the country was with them that for the first time in Spanish history they had enfranchised the women (over the age of 23); though they knew that there were in Spain 500,000 more women than men, and that the clergy and the Fascists entered upon an intensive campaign amongst the women.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Fascists now redoubled their activity. I am not here concerned with economic matters, but many readers will care to know what truth there is in the common statement that Spain was being ruined and had to be saved. The answer is in statistics that any person may verify in the *Statesman's Year Book*. The depression was still heavy, and almost every country in the world showed a deficit (United States \$1,000,000,000, Italy 3,000,000,000 lire, Germany 800,000,000 marks, etc.) in its annual budget. Yet in its 1932-3 budget Spain showed a deficit of only about £400,000, and still less in the following year. From 1930 to 1934, the most terrible years of the depression, Spain's national income rose very considerably. The whole history of the events which led to the tragedy of 1936 is smeared with mendacity. This, of course, was not wholly in the interest of the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Peers, with his pedantic array of insignificant facts and solemn authorities for them, here makes a mistake which must gravely mislead the reader. He implies that the women had voted at the 1931 election.

Church, but we must remember that in Spain Fascism boasts that it is above all devoted to the Church.

The Catholics were disappointed, for even with the Agrarians the deputies of the Right were in a minority, and they took every advantage of the instability of the political situation. In the course of 1934 both Catholics and their extreme opponents began to collect arms, and Lerroux drew nearer to Robles. Three Catholics were admitted to the Cabinet, and the Socialists protested that this was a violation of the republican agreement—as it was—and prepared for a Fascist-Liberal coup. Lerroux in October became Prime Minister, and two days later he declared the country in a state of war and precipitated the Socialist-Communist-Syndicalist revolt, especially in Catalonia and the Asturias. With the usual and significant distrust of the Spanish soldier, the authorities brought the Foreign Legion and the Moors to suppress the insurrection.

The only point that concerns us here is whether, as three-fourths of our papers so easily assume, the Spanish workers now deserted their long tradition of humanity and committed outrages. Professor Peers takes the facile view that, while the stories of outrage were probably much exaggerated, it is just as probable that there *were* outrages on both sides. An expert and impartial historian cannot so easily dismiss a dispute. He asks what is the nature of the evidence on both sides. For the supposed "Red" outrages it is almost entirely propagandist journalism, especially in Robles's paper, and Mrs. Leah Manning shows in her temperate work, *What I Saw in Spain*, how these reports were obtained. The mother-superioress of a large convent which the miners had used as their hospital at Oviedo was pressed to say that they had raped her nuns. In this case they were not able to

convince the lady that the end justified the means, and she denied it. I understand that the only grievance of the nuns was that the language of the miner-soldiers was not what one usually hears in a convent. It must be known to everybody how the Earl of Listowel and Miss Ellen Wilkinson were, when they afterwards went with important introductions to the Asturias to investigate these stories, expelled by the military under false pretences; and even this was very untruthfully misrepresented afterwards by Spanish Catholic propagandist articles in English monthlies. Finally, both President Zamora and Premier Lerroux assured Lord Listowel—he told me—that the stories of outrages by the rebels were false.

On the other hand, the evidence for the outrages perpetrated upon the Reds after the suppression of the rebellion by Catholic Civil Guards and the Moors—the Foreign Legionaries seem almost to have confined themselves to looting—is such that for an historian to imply that it is as unreliable as the evidence on the other side is strange. Professor Peers includes Mrs. Manning's book in his bibliography, but he omits to inform his readers that they will find in Appendices to that book a full translation of three very serious documents about the outrages. Three influential Spaniards, Professor Fernando de los Rios, ex-Minister of Education, Señor F. G. Ordas, Liberal ex-Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Señor Alvarez del Vayo investigated, independently, what had occurred, and in three separate reports to Lerroux gave, in full detail of names and places, a long list of brutal outrages. The Civil Guards (rural Catholics) especially behaved savagely. The Moors did what any man who knows anything about them would expect: what General Franco must have expected in 1936. The revelations caused such horror in Spain that, although

the Catholics angrily demanded the death-sentence, no rebel was executed.

### § 3. *The Catholic Revolt*

The true story of what has happened in 1936 cannot yet be written, but the facts I have given establish three points which are cardinal in our present inquiry. Let me state them with full clearness and conciseness :

1. Beyond any question and on the authority of all our leading writers on Spain (the *Cambridge History*, Major Hume, Professor Clarke, etc.),<sup>1</sup> brutal treatment of opponents, even unarmed opponents, is an ancient and consistent tradition of whatever party the Spanish Church enlists in its service.

2. During 120 years of struggle the opponents of the Church never indulged in reprisals, always checked the natural proneness of the workers to burn churches, and were until 1934 never accused of outrages.

3. Since 1931, when the educated part of Spain declared against the Church by a majority of three to one, the Church has been fighting for its life, and the civil war of 1936 would quite clearly not have occurred if the Church had not encouraged the Catholic Popular Action and the army leaders.

The repeated declarations of General Franco and General Queipo de Llano that their first aim is the restoration of the Church dispense me from quoting ecclesiastical pronouncements. Spanish prelates in the rebel area have very emphatically supported this, and the Pope has, we saw, publicly identified himself with the "destruction of Bolshevism in Spain." The most reliable correspondents

<sup>1</sup> In my *Splendour of Moorish Spain* I have shown that the *History of Spain* (1934) of Sir Charles Petrie and Louis Bertrand (a French Catholic propagandist) contains extraordinary errors and is quite unreliable.

have described the use of churches as arsenals, and in the phase of candour, when the date was definitely fixed for the Catholic banquet in Madrid, the dailies published photographs of an amazing use of the cathedral at Palma for military purposes. In fact, the Press now (January 8th) announces that the Pope has "a confidential semi-official representative with General Franco's government."

There remains, in fact, only one point of importance to make clear. The Catholic members of the Cabinet resigned when the Government refused to shoot the rebel leaders in 1934, but shortly afterwards a Government was formed with a Catholic majority and with Robles as Minister of War. In face of this menace the Radicals, Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, and Syndicalists suspended their quarrels and formed the Frente Popular. In February the general election occurred, and it is common to say that the anti-clericals lost so heavily that General Franco may now be held to represent the majority of the people. Nothing of the kind occurred. The Centre (Liberal) got 52 seats, the various parties of the Left (Radicals, Socialists, and Communists) 256. These (308) all supported the Republic and the Constitution and united to form a Government. Against them were only 165 deputies of various groups forming the Right or the Opposition.

One of our literary statesmen has sought to correct this by pointing out that the deputies of the Right polled 4,750,000 votes and those of the Left only 4,356,000. He forgot to say that the Liberal-Republican vote (340,000) should be added to that of the Left. But, being imperfectly informed on Spanish affairs—which does not seem to deter anybody from writing on them nowadays—he committed an elementary blunder, yet his figures are



quoted on every side. The number of voters in Spain since the Socialists enfranchised the women is 12,548,499. Where are the non-voting 3,300,000? They are, of course, apart from invalids—though every bed-ridden nun and pious spinster in Spain was carried to the polls—the Anarchists and Syndicalists, who, not believing in the idea of central government, never vote. In spite of threats and violence, of two years of intense Catholic propaganda, of the use of the old electoral trickery in rural districts, only little more than one-third of adult Spain voted for the Church.

So the plot was hatched. Unpardonably the Government left the highest military commands in the hands of reactionaries and the control of them in the hands of Gil Robles, with the Catholic millionaire Juan March gathering funds in the background. In the summer the attention of the public was distracted by the conversion of Madrid into a sort of European Chicago. Our Professor Peers puts it that there was "an epidemic of murder by gunmen, for at least some of which there was an uncomfortably and rapidly growing suspicion that Fascism was mainly responsible" (p. 195). The religious judgment must not be hasty. Who can really prove that the carloads of gunmen who murderously poured shot into men coming out of Socialist meetings were Fascists? The "Reds" certainly retaliated. The Government were severely to blame. They even lightly said that they knew there was a military plot and did not fear it; though they may justly say to-day that they had not expected to have to fight Italy and Germany as well as 30,000 Moors. They still believed in international honour and courage.

Not to-day can we write with confidence on what has happened under the red clouds which have for months

enveloped Spain. But history tells us where to expect brutality, and we shall not be surprised to hear that in this war of extermination it occurred on every side. Spain seems, as I write, to be doomed in spite of its heroism. It could have crushed the rebels, but . . . So the Church may "triumph" over the same ravaged and anguished people as it did in 1814 and 1822, as it triumphed over Italy in 1848, over the Protestants in many countries in the seventeenth century, over the Albigensians in the thirteenth. "Cursed is he that refraineth his sword from blood," Gregory VII had written (Epp. I, 9). Immutable Rome.

*Note.*—The *Irish Times*, January 23rd, 1937, published a letter from the Jesuit Father Gannon, in which that resolute propagandist says that there are "ten or fifteen million Catholics" in Spain. The looseness of the figure is amusing, but even if we take the larger number the apologist grants that nearly half the population (29,000,000) have left the Church; and we do not usually accept an apologist's extreme claim.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PRINCIPLES OF ROMAN LAW AND POLICY

**I**N a later chapter I shall have to tell of a ghastly exposure of monastic morals in the year 1936 which reverberated like the shock of a great explosion through Germany. Some such shock comes to most people when for the first time they learn that the law of the mediæval Church, with its sentences of death and all its stark tyranny and intolerance, is the law of the Roman Church to-day, reprinted in the twentieth century, waiting for the day when the devil has lost his hold upon our modern world and the Church can apply its benign decrees.

A year ago I gave a full account of this in an American publication, and it had an amusing sequel. One of my American correspondents, a dignitary of one of the Churches, lent a copy of my article to a Catholic lady of some importance and much zeal in New York. Having a very honest mind, she read it, and at the next meeting of prelates and other influential Catholics which she had to attend to plot their operations, she produced the periodical and demanded to know if my statements were true. Assurances that I am a thoroughly disreputable person—the kind of statements that they never put into print in England and the United States—failed to silence her, and the last I heard of the business was that she had formed a private reading-circle of Catholic teachers to study Canon Law with my essay as an authority !

It has often amused my friends or audiences to learn that I am under sentence of death in the law of the Roman Church. A dead letter, no doubt, they say: and certainly none of us believes that, even if the Fascist Powers with which the Pope allies himself so zealously were to conquer Europe, there will ever again be faggots or scaffolds in the market-place. But half that mistaken leniency with which so many are induced to regard the Roman Church to-day as just one of a dozen beneficent spiritual influences is due to a complete ignorance of its laws and principles. It is, naturally, an excusable ignorance. The literary men who are persuaded to lend their names to the Church, the Catholic friends with whom you play bridge, even the great majority of the pale young men and women who orate in our parks and watch Catholic interests in the press, are quite ignorant of the truth. Hence before I show how the story of the Vatican's horrid policy in Spain is repeated in every land it is advisable to study its legal claims and principles.

Understand that there is here no question of cloaks and masks, of secret oaths of Knights of Columbus and secret vows of Jesuit novices, of nocturnal meetings like those fabled conspiracies of the Elders of Zion. It is not even a question of going back beyond this century or probing into darker depths than those which lie under the veil of a dead language. I propose to expound, quoting the official Papal documents, the Law of the Church as it is formulated and acted upon by the Vatican to-day, and to show that a Pope who holds such principles must pursue a policy that seems revolting to the modern mind and threatens the moral basis of modern civilization. To associate what is happening with the peculiar temperament of the present Pope, Pius XI, is altogether wrong. It is an application of Church Law.

§ 1. *The Exoteric and the Esoteric Code*

The Catholic historian Dr. Ludwig Pastor, whose learned and fairly candid *History of the Papacy* brought confusion upon its simple-minded author, tells us that Pope Leo XIII threw open the long-sealed Secret Archives of the Vatican and enjoined Catholic scholars to "tell the truth," but that when he sought certain manuscripts which he knew to be in the Roman Archives, he learned that these had been withdrawn into a smaller chamber which was still sealed. It was much the same when, in the year 1918, the Vatican published a new code of Canon Law, which people understand to be the law of the Church, and gave permission for it to be translated into every tongue. No more secrets. Writers like McCabe were telling the world that in its legal code the Church embodies claims which no State in the world could allow and which, if generally known, would convert into disdain the leniency with which many non-Catholics had begun to regard the Church. Here was the answer. You can read Canon Law for yourself to-day, in English, French, Italian, or German, and there is in it none of that insolent intolerance, that claim to be above the State, or that thirst for the blood of heretics with which the Church had been reproached.

Every Catholic writer or priest who makes this point incurs a grave suspicion. Not only were all the bishops of the Church, including the English, consulted at every step in the compilation of this Code, as is stated in the introduction to it, but there are certain further observations in the introduction which tell any Catholic who is competent to read these matters that this is only *part* of the law of the Church, and not the part which we criticize.

In his *Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law*, the Rev. Professor Augustine mentions that the body of Church Law is divided by canonists into "private" and "public." Even he does not clearly warn the reader that this new Code is only the "private" law of the Church, and that "private" in this connection means "domestic," or laws passed by the Popes for dealing with their own Catholic subjects. In the introduction it is stated that the first rule given to the compilers was: "The Code is to contain only laws relating to discipline," and discipline means action within the Church. You might, if you were at all familiar with this canonical jargon, object that I, for instance, am still a subject of the Pope—so he and all Catholics hold—yet the Code says nothing about how the Church ought to deal with me. But there is another clause of the introduction which no one who is not familiar with these matters would understand, but which a priest does. It says that the new Code abrogates any earlier law that is not mentioned in it "unless it is based upon divine law, positive or natural." And that is just the basis claimed for all the most intolerant and barbaric laws (such as the right and duty to put apostate Catholics to death) of the Church. They are left, in Latin, in the body of "public" law. They might offend the nostrils of some of the literary and artistic converts to the Church.

So what you read in any vernacular language as the law of the Church is a compilation of disciplinary measures within the fold. It is not the law or the claims on which the Papacy shapes (when it is allowed) its attitude towards other religions and secular authorities, so we will not linger over it, though it has points of interest. We smile when we read such things as that baptism is "necessary to all for salvation either in fact or desire" (Canon 737),

that priests must not be tried by civil magistrates or judges (120), that the Pope has "supreme jurisdiction all over the earth" (even in Russia) in anything that he chooses to consider a matter of morals or discipline. We may still smile when we read how Catholics must not read any criticism of their Church without permission of a priest (1399), and may not have even a private discussion of religion with such a critic (1325). But the clauses or canons about marriage make the priestly commentators themselves do anything but smile. A marriage performed by a Protestant minister or a civil registrar is, if either or both of the spouses is a Catholic, invalid (1094); and Father (Professor) Waywood shows in his commentary on the law that the Vatican reaffirmed this to anxious inquirers. A secret unregistered marriage by a priest is valid (1105): a Protestant who turns Catholic can have his or her marriage declared null by the Church and may marry a Catholic (1120, 1121); a lady who can persuade herself that her parents exercised undue pressure on her may (if she is rich enough, as in the Marlborough and other recent cases) have the marriage annulled at Rome.

But these flat contradictions of the law of every civilized State and every modern sentiment are trifles in comparison with the "public" law. The most authoritative manual of this is the *Institutiones Juris Ecclesiastici Publici* of Father Marianus de Luca, professor of Church Law in the Papal University at Rome. The book was published by the Vatican Press in 1901, and Pope Leo XIII gave it his special approval. There are other and later versions, such as Cardinal Lépicier's (another Papal professor) *De Stabilitate et Progressu Dogmatis*, but the extreme claims are just the same, and are all based upon "divine law," and therefore not affected by the new shop-window Code.

The fundamental principle is that the Church is the only "perfect society," and therefore can dictate to other societies (governments, nations, or sects) on any point which it chooses to regard as affecting faith or morals. The Pope is the judge in any dispute. From this is derived at once the right and duty, in a Catholic State, to control education and literature in every branch and to forbid the preaching or practice of any other religion. It is further deduced that civil courts cannot try priests for crime unless the Pope permits. But the chief point that concerns me in this work is that it is claimed emphatically, repeatedly, and at great length (in about ten pages) that the Church has the right and the duty to put heretics to death; and by "heretics" Church Law means, not any person who rejects Catholic doctrines, but any and every person who has seceded from the Roman Church. No such thing as secession is recognized. Any person who has been baptized, probably when a baby a few weeks old, in the Catholic Church remains for life a subject of the Pope, and, if he professes to have withdrawn from the Church and denies its doctrines, he becomes a heretic and must be put to death.

I gave translated passages from this manual of "Public Church Law" in my *Popes and their Church* and for the convenience of the reader will reproduce them here :

When the inviolable right of any society begins to be assailed and denied, we have then above all to assert and vindicate it. Now, if ever this was done, it is especially in our age that we see the right of inflicting upon the guilty whatever penalties be necessary, however severe, particularly what is called "the right of the sword," denied to the perfect society [the Church] and the death-sentence buried among dead laws. . . . Against these Regalists and their modern followers we affirm that the Church has a coercive power even to the extent of the death-sentence. We start with the



vindication of this right by the Church, both on account of opponents who loudly accuse our mother the Church of unjust and wicked action in sentencing heretics to death, especially of putting to death certain leaders of heresy and apostates, and because from the right to inflict capital punishment we easily deduce the right to inflict lesser penalties (Vol. I, p. 132).

The death-sentence is a necessary and efficacious means for the Church to attain its end when rebels against it and disturbers of the ecclesiastical unity, especially obstinate heretics and heresiarchs, cannot be restrained by any other penalty from continuing to disturb the ecclesiastical order and impelling others to all sorts of crime, particularly ecclesiastical crime. . . . When the perversity of one or several is calculated to bring about the ruin of one or many of its children it is bound effectively to remove it, in such wise that if there be no other remedy for saving its people it can and must put these wicked men to death (p. 143).

Unbelievers who have at one time belonged to the faith, such as heretics and all apostates, may, absolutely and by common law, be visited with corporal punishment, and even death, for deserting the faith, and may be compelled to resume it (p. 270).

Cardinal Lépicier is just as emphatic.

No one doubts that they [apostates] do not merely deserve to be cut off from the Church by excommunication, but that they deserve to be put to death. . . . So, as soon as any man publicly professes heresy and tries by word or example to pervert others . . . he may justly be put to death (p. 194).

He has a score of pages on the subject; and he will not acknowledge "good faith" in seceders, for "no one can lose the faith except by the very gravest sin" (p. 201).

## § 2. *Deceiving the Catholic Public*

This is the esoteric law of the Church. It is not obsolete law. Both Dr. Marianus de Luca and the Cardinal heatedly attack that opinion, which some

liberal Catholics had published. And they are not theologians expressing personal opinions about doctrines : they are stating the Church's official position in the twentieth century. They are teaching this in the Papal (or Gregorian) University at Rome, where Jesuits watch the orthodoxy of professors and where selected priests from all countries are trained.

And not one Catholic in a hundred thousand knows that this is the law of his Church to-day. I doubt if one priest in a hundred knows it. Public Church Law is, as a rule, not part of their training. I had seven years' training for the priesthood (including a year at Louvain University), and then spent four years in the seminary as professor of philosophy and ecclesiastical history. But I did not know this. If that seems inconsistent with the canonists' insistence that it is not a dead letter, remember that there is no reason whatever why common priests should be taught these things. It is, in fact, better that they should not know them. They can preach all the more eloquently on the Church's tolerance and desire to co-operate with the modern State. As to the laity, it is most important to keep these things from them in England and America. Their neighbours are apt to ask them " what Catholics really believe."

But the Church's apologists in this country and America go much further than declining to translate the Latin manuals of Public Church Law and giving the impression that the new Code of Canon Law (which is only the private or domestic part of Church Law) tells the whole of the Church's claims. Now and again, it is true, a naïve and myopic seminary-professor blurts out the truth. The head of the Catholic University at Washington, for instance, Dr. J. A. Ryan, has a delicious passage in his *Catholic Church and the Citizen* (p. 36). To

explain why Catholics demand toleration everywhere, yet are bound by their own law to refuse it to other sects in a Catholic country, he blandly says that "error has not the same rights as truth." He must have been angrily reprimanded, for it is the almost invariable practice to represent that the Church would not only never again persecute or suppress rival religions, but that, on the contrary, it is the very source of the modern spirit of liberty and independence.

Here are some gems from American Catholic apologists, all priests, prelates, or professors :

Would we [Catholics] alter, if we could, the Constitution in regard to its treatment of religion, the principles of Americanism in regard to religious freedom? I answer with an emphatic No.<sup>1</sup>

I believe in absolute freedom of conscience for all and in an equality of all Churches, all sects, and all beliefs before the law as a matter of right and not as a matter of favour. I believe in the absolute separation of Church and State. . . . I believe in the right of any parent to choose whether his child shall be educated in the public school or in a religious school.<sup>2</sup>

It was not until the descendants of the Reformers divorced themselves from the doctrines of their founders and wedded themselves to the ancient Catholic political principles that they were able to give birth to modern democracy as we know it.<sup>3</sup>

In its framework the Constitution of the United States is modelled on that of the Constitutions of the Dominican and Jesuit Orders.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Ireland in the (published) sermon delivered to a mass-meeting of Catholics, August 11th, 1913. Pope Leo XIII had drastically condemned "Americanism" some years earlier.

<sup>2</sup> Al Smith in *The Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1927. This letter was written for Smith by a Catholic theologian just at the time when Pope Pius XI was insisting in Italy on the strict Public Law. But, you may remember, they had put Smith forward as a candidate for the Presidency!

<sup>3</sup> Father S. J. McNamara, *American Democracy and Catholic Doctrine*.

<sup>4</sup> Father J. A. Hyland, *Rome and the White House*.

A very popular argument is that it was the Catholic Church which led a wicked and intolerant world to turn to the practice of toleration, since it was the "Catholic" colony of Maryland that first decreed it. The truth is that even so ancient a classic of American history as Bancroft showed decades ago that from the start Catholics were a small minority in Maryland, and they got Lord Baltimore to secure toleration *for themselves*. It would be peculiar if (as is now commonly said in Catholic literature) freedom and toleration were born of the teaching of Thomas Aquinas and Suarez, yet Catholics had to get 4000 miles away from Rome for their first taste of them, and then under a Protestant majority.

An even worse practice, both in England and America, is to represent Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Immortale Dei* as a Papal formulation of religious liberty and toleration. The title is altered in the English translation from "On the Catholic Constitution of States" to "On the Christian Constitution of States," and at some passages the note of intolerance is softened by ingenious mistranslation. But the whole argument is farcical because, not only did Leo send to the American bishops and make public a most humiliating condemnation of "Americanism" (as he called it), but this Encyclical was from beginning to end a fiery condemnation of the separation of Church and State in France.

I need not prolong this section. Any reader who has some acquaintance with Catholics or Catholic literature will know that they now habitually represent the Church as having disowned the right to punish seceders with death, reconciled itself to our modern ideal of toleration and liberty of conscience, and clinging to no claim that puts it in opposition to the modern State and the principles of modern civilization. That is entirely false. The

Church has never disowned any mediæval principle or practice. No Pope has. Its code of public law—the law which rules its relations to States and other religions—is exactly the same. That is the teaching to-day in the Papal University and all authoritative manuals; and, as we shall see in the next chapter, it has been publicly and emphatically stated by the present Pope, Pius XI.

### § 3. *The Unwritten Code*

Let us be practical. All Catholics believe that a time will come when their Church will rule the solid majority of the citizens of every country. All non-Catholics regard that as one of the funny results of censorship and “the Catholic atmosphere.” But even if, as has been done in Italy, Poland, and Austria, and is being done in Spain, the Church succeeds by an alliance with violence in recovering power in many countries, there would still be, as there are in Italy, so many millions refractory to it, and the application of its lethal penalty would rouse such anger and disgust throughout civilization that we are quite sure seceders from the Church will never again be burned.

But the reader will by this time have recognized that this code of esoteric law is the basis of the Papal policy of allying itself everywhere with murderous violence, with military revolts, with the harshest tyranny in order to recover its lost territory. Even Catholic States may no longer listen to the acrid demands of priests that rebels against the Papacy shall be put to death, but it remains the unaltered creed and principle of the Papacy that the lives of such rebels are forfeit. When the Pope shrieks for the “destruction of Bolshevism in Spain,” is he concerned about its economic or political creed? No English Catholic writer would dare to say that. There are tens

of thousands of Catholic working-men in the Socialist movement in this country. It is all a question of Papal power over seceders and those who provoke secessions. A seceder from Rome, the law says, remains a subject of the Pope and must be compelled to return to the fold or die. No sophistry can make that law ambiguous or doubtful. But to-day the Vatican looks out upon a world in which some 50,000,000 have seceded from the Church in a quarter of a century, and the stream was flowing faster every decade.

It is in the light of this more or less secret but emphatically asserted code of rights that we understand the readiness of the Vatican to ally itself with the deeply stained tyranny of Mussolini and with the generals who, with barbaric or alien forces, are crushing to pulp the women and children of Spain, and its indecent eagerness to co-operate with the equally bloodstained authorities of Germany in a war upon Russia. And there is an unwritten code which helps to shape its procedure. It is not true that either the Vatican or any theologian has ever formally and explicitly laid down the principle that the end justifies the means, but the Papacy has always acted on the assumption that in achieving the restoration of its power the ordinary restraints upon conduct may be suspended. The two men whom a Catholic would call the greatest of the Popes, Gregory VII and Innocent III, sanctioned the use in the service of the Church of lying, forgery, and appalling cruelty. The use of mendacity, of an obviously deliberate suppression or manipulation of facts, is a part of Catholic propaganda throughout the world. I have just given a few instances of it, and my historical works contain thousands. The doctrine of "mental reservation" is still given, even in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, as sound Catholic doctrine, and Father

Joyce, explaining that it means making statements with a mental qualification, says :

Those who hear them may understand them in a sense that is not true, but self-deception may be permitted by the speaker for a good reason.

In my clerical days I knew priests of high position to lie deliberately in the interest of the Church and appeal to this doctrine.

But I have said enough about those maxims, principles, and claims which are in the mind of the Papacy when it adopts a policy that seems to most of us profoundly immoral. The Catholic plea that "saving the souls of men," which is supposed to be peculiarly connected with the power of the Roman Church, outweighs all scruples about bodily suffering and decency appeals to few of us. Comparing my own clerical experience with that of many others, I say very positively that half the priests are themselves in greater or less degree sceptical, and that only a small minority are deeply convinced and devout. Genuine religion counts for very little in this matter. The Papacy has a code of law to which it clings, a law which denies the right of the individual even to his life unless he is docile to it, which sets it apart from all other religious organizations. In virtue of that code it is to-day helping to wreck the civilization of which it professes to be the supreme guardian. Madrid, shattered and blood-streaked, is a symbol of the Pope's will-to-power.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POPE AND THE ITALIAN FASCISTS

WE have so far consented, under cajolery or threats, to remove from our literature, journalism, and schools whatever is "offensive to Catholics" that few now know how the history of many countries even in the last century is sodden with blood and tears owing to this ruthless will-to-power of the Papacy. The Catholic layman, indeed, is so pathetically ignorant of it, since he is forbidden to read any writer who tells the facts, that he ingenuously wonders "why men hate the Church so much," and he is ready to accept the infantile explanation of his priest, that it is so holy that the devil rages against it with peculiar frenzy. He must not read even the Catholic writer who has the culture and courage to ascertain the facts. The Catholic historian Lord Acton, writing to the Catholic historian Lady Blennerhassett, said :

The accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountain [the most famous assassins in history] picked off individual victims, but the Papacy contrived murder and massacre on the largest and also on the most cruel and inhuman scale. They were not only wholesale assassins, but they also made the principle of assassination a law of the Christian Church and a condition of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

But the Popes soon suppressed this disgraceful attempt of a few scholarly men and women to tell the truth within

<sup>1</sup> *Selections from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton*, 1917, Vol. I, p. 55.



the fold and, ironically enough, struck a gold medal on which the Pope figured as St. George and Modernism (or Actonism) as the dragon.

It is worse that the non-Catholic public, which means more than nineteen-twentieths of the population of this country, has been defrauded of the historical truth at the dictation or by the intrigue of the one-twentieth. If it were a question of some moral aberration of the Papacy in the gross atmosphere of the Middle Ages, a policy that had been disowned and replaced by a procedure in consonance with at least the elementary decencies of our age, we might not complain. We might be content to refute false statements about it. But it is a vital element of our attitude to the world-peril and world-degradation of our time that we should see that the Vatican cherishes claims which reddened the earth for centuries and are at the root of its encouragement of war and brutal tyranny to-day.

We might still use temperate language if we could believe that the savagery was confined to outlying and not easily controlled provinces of the Church, like Spain, or that the Popes who presided over the Church in that bloodiest stretch of modern history (1800-1850) were austere and deeply convinced executors of their creed. This is the exact opposite of the truth. In Italy, or in that part of Italy (central and southern) which the Popes knew most intimately and ruled most despotically, the butchery was at its foulest. The contemporary historian of the kingdom of Naples, General Colletta, who described what he saw (and as a royalist, not rebel, commander), says that between 1799 and 1825 at least 100,000 men, women, and children lost their lives in a struggle similar to that in Spain, and the continuer of Colletta's history claims that 150,000 were added to the roll of martyrs in

the next thirty years. The barbarity was such that ragged champions of Church and Throne roasted and ate the bodies of liberals under the palace-windows at Naples, leaders whom king and queen addressed in their letters as "Dear General" kept the heads of rebels on the table while they ate and drank their blood from skulls; and after fifty years of this savagery Gladstone had to invoke the anger of the civilized world to put an end to the inhuman tyranny.

Not only did the hierarchy in Naples support the Neros—they were quite equal to Nero in vice and cruelty—of the Sicilian royal house. Not only was the kingdom of Naples the Pope's nearest and most docile neighbour. But, though the actual executions and massacres were far less in the Pope's own kingdom, the tyranny was sordid and the suffering incalculable. Thousands rotted every year in such dungeons as the tourist may see in Venice to-day—jails in which the diet was an insufficient quantity of coarse bread and tepid tallow-soup (*cibó caldo*), and those who were condemned (without trial) to ten years or more were chained to the wall and never unlocked even for sanitary reasons. I do not propose to write here another historical chapter, and need say only that there is no dispute about these matters. All the leading contemporary Italian writers (Cantú, Farini, D'Azeglio, etc.—I have read them all) and the leading modern authorities on Italian history (the *Cambridge History*, Bishop Nielsen, Thayer, King, Orsi, Croce, Okey, etc.) are agreed.

They are agreed also in describing the unspeakably foul condition of the Papal States which the Popes used their brutality to retain. It is one of the ironies of the state of popular instruction to-day that myriads of books and press-articles commend the serene moral-political

wisdom of the Papacy while all our standard authorities tell that when the Pope had a kingdom—as late as 1860—it was the foulest in Europe. It is enough to say that in the *Cambridge Modern History* (Vol. X, p. 164), our standard authority, the Catholic Lady Blennerhassett, approvingly quotes the saying of Father Lamennais, who visited Rome in this period, that it was “the most hideous sewer that ever offended the eye of man.” Lord Clarendon publicly called the Papal States “the opprobrium of Europe,” and the Pope, as King, had the almost uniquely humiliating experience of being ordered by the five leading Powers, two of them Protestant (England and Prussia), to cleanse and reform his dominions. As to the “austere” Popes of this period of brutality, Leo XII (1823–9) was a senile converted rake whose chief occupation was shooting birds; Pius VIII (1829–30) was a paralytic wreck, slobbering senilely as they wheeled him about the palace; and Gregory XVI (1836–46), though a monk, was a greedy sensualist with a passion for unsavoury gossip and sweetmeats and very unsavoury favourites. On these things also the authorities are agreed, and we will pass at once to the modern struggle.

### § 1. *Heavy Losses in Italy*

Though the Italians had taken the Papal States in legitimate warfare, they shrewdly invited the inhabitants to declare in a plebiscite whether they wanted to remain under the Pope. More than 360,000 voted against the Pope and less than 12,000 for him. Recent writers either ignore this overwhelming condemnation of the Pope's fitness to guide States or repeat the Catholic plea that sincere Catholics had refused to vote. That would make the number of sincere Catholics in the Pope's own domain alarmingly small, for, since the entire population was only

3,000,000, the adult males with the right to vote were not much more than half a million. For instance, in the city and province of Rome 167,000 had the right to vote. Included in these was an army of clerics and clerical employees, yet 133,000 voted against the Pope. The Italian Government nevertheless assigned the Pope an annual revenue, in compensation, of 3,250,000 *lire* a year. Successive Popes have refused this, preferring to open the purses of foreign Catholics wider by posing as "the prisoners of the Vatican" and branding the Italian royal family and Government "bandits." This regime led to the most grotesque incidents at Rome and excited the disdain of educated Italians.

In fact, this attitude and the still living memory of all the foulness and brutality of the Papal rule—at least 40,000 men and women (sometimes both sexes were in the same jail) had suffered for years in the unspeakably vile Papal jails—fostered the growth of anti-clericalism, and by the end of the century the Italian middle-class, especially the intellectuals, had for the most part left the Church. In 1909 I analysed all available evidence in my *Decay of the Church of Rome*. I had in 1904 attended a Freethought Congress in Rome. It was openly patronized by and received remarkable concessions from the Government, which gave us half-fare on all Italian railways, and the Roman municipality, which opened every institution free to us. The vast crowd that gathered with us—we numbered 20,000 at the breach in the walls where the Piedmontese troops had burst into Rome—and the warmth of the reception everywhere gave the impression that Catholics were a small minority in the Pope's city. I showed, in fact, that he had lost at least 6,000,000 out of a total population of 32,000,000; and of the remaining 26,000,000 (or probably less) nearly 20,000,000

were children or illiterates. The urban workers were now largely literate, and the most scurrilous anti-Papal illustrated weeklies (*L'Asino* and *Il Papagallo*) sold more than 1,000,000 copies a week. At this time Socialism, which the Church accused of "organizing irreligion," was a small force. Its growth, and the appearance of Communism, trebled the number of seceders. When the Pope brands Bolshevism the deadly enemy of civilization—which means the force that has destroyed at least one-fourth of his Church in twenty years—he means Socialism as well as Communism; for in pre-Fascist Italy, in Spain, and in Mexico the Socialists outnumbered the Communists by four or five to one. No genuine Catholic could support Socialists in Italy or Spain. Not only did the Pope thunder anathemas against them, but even the Catholic democratic leader, Father Murri, described Socialism as a creed which "made its very system and law out of opposition to the Church and religion."

Hence the electoral returns give us here an even safer indication than in the case of Spain. At the election of the year 1919, before Mussolini began to make big progress, the Socialists polled 1,840,593 votes out of a total of about 3,500,000: more than a half of the literate adult males of the country. In 1921, after the split in the party which gave Mussolini his opportunity and when corruption at the polls had begun, they still got 1,569,533 votes and the Communists 291,952. The General Confederation of Labour, which was a Socialist body, had 2,150,000 members, of whom 750,000 were agricultural workers. In 1920 the Socialists captured the municipal government in 2163 Italian towns. The conclusion is, in view of the Vatican's stern denunciation of Socialism, inexorable that half the adult male workers of Italy had quitted the Church, and they had immense organizations

of women and children. Add to these the predominantly anti-Papal middle-class. Italians of superior education proved so refractory even after Mussolini's bargain with the Vatican that the Duce was unable to let the Pope have, as he demanded, the control of the universities. The Pope saw his Church crumbling away in Italy. Propaganda was futile and was derided. He began, as in Spain, to look round for gunmen.

### § 2. *The Rise and Character of Fascism*

Benito Mussolini was a particularly violent, indeed quite scurrilous, atheist and republican until 1921. In 1922 he was shaking the hand of the King in Rome, presenting a valuable old library to the Pope, and urging his followers to see that the presence in their capital of the Papacy gave Rome a valuable international prestige. To-day he attends pious functions and gives pearl rosary-beads as presents to his daughters; and he shares with the Pope the distinction of having deprived Italy of those rights of free discussion and independent personality for which, since 1799, the country had sacrificed the lives of nearly a quarter of a million of its finest sons and daughters, of having debauched with war-propaganda the minds of millions of Italians, and of having the chief share in bringing degradation and the threat of ruin upon Europe.

Until his thirtieth year this robust son of a village blacksmith (later innkeeper) was an obscure and impecunious journalistic adventurer. Thanks to the Liberal statesmen of United Italy, whom he has since lashed with the grossest abuse, he received a better education than his father had had, but the violence of his attacks upon Church, Throne, and Army got him driven from Italy for a time. Early in the war he sold his passionate

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pacifism to the French for the funds to start an interventionist paper. This alienated the majority of the Socialists, but he continued his lurid attacks upon priests and capitalists, and even defended Anarchist outrages. Italy was full of fermenting elements, especially unemployed ex-soldiers, and from these he formed semi-military Fasci (companies) to fight the Socialists and Communists who despised him. His movement was mentioned in the world-press, when it was noticed at all, with disdain of its vulgarity and violence. Mussolini invented the propagandist device of capturing isolated opponents and forcing large quantities of castor oil down their throats. His admirers to-day would shudder if they looked through the files of English papers for 1920 and 1921. Automatics soon replaced the castor-oil bottle.

This is not the place to analyse the influences that lifted him in little more than a year from the gutter to a sort of throne. All that concerns us is that these influences insisted on his abandonment of his anti-Papal attitude, but the Pope, while accepting his valuable gifts and compliments, and even thanking God very ceremoniously when he escaped an attempt at assassination, continued to regard him as an apostate of more than dubious faith and morals. His successive mistresses were well known, though he now posed as the stern patron and protector of the sanctity of the home. This state of things—the two men eyeing each other across Rome like two tom-cats on a roof—lasted six years. Various attempts were made to bring them into co-operation, but the Pope's terms were exorbitant, the Fascists were very largely scornfully anti-Papal, and Mussolini believed that he could consolidate his position without the Pope's assistance. Liberalism and Socialism were still powerful and only partially controlled. In 1926 they polled

2,494,685 votes, at a time when Italian propaganda abroad represented the country as worshipping its new leader. Indeed, the murder in 1924 of one of the finest of the Socialist leaders, Matteotti, and Mussolini's callous attempts to belittle it, aroused an anger that for more than a year menaced his position.

Within two years of this he sent 10,000 of his critics to jail and destroyed the last vestige of freedom. "Fascism," he said in a public speech, "has marched to victory over the rotting corpse of liberty." The country still seethed with revolt against him, and he began at last to entertain the overtures of the Pope's representatives. The negotiations, interrupted by violent quarrels and made almost fruitless by the Pope's demands—full control of the young, the incorporation of Canon Law in the laws of Italy, and the return of his Temporal Power—did not reach success until early in 1929. The Pope risked much to get the offered prize of £19,000,000 and the free Vatican City. Mussolini, on the other hand, knew that his most ardent followers, who were generally anti-Papal, would see that his promises were not literally fulfilled. His speeches in Parliament at this time and after the contract was signed—he insisted that he had "made no concessions"—show that he had very serious difficulty in inducing his followers to agree to the bargain. But the Pope still had the power to compel more than half of Italy to submit to him, while the Fascist party did not number a million members. To a booklet on the compact which I wrote at the time I gave the title *The Blackshirt and the Blackmailer*.

### § 3. *The Unholy Alliance*

Many readers will remember the unctuous language in which most of our papers greeted the signing of the



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agreement on February 11th, 1929. The long rift in the spiritual life of Italy had ended, and Church and State were to work henceforward in fruitful co-operation. That the Pope had accepted £19,000,000 in cash—I have heard that he invested the £8,000,000 cash in America and lost it in the crash—and bonds (5 per cent. State-bonds) was regarded as entirely proper. It was just the accumulated annual payment which the Government had assigned him (and every Pope had since refused) in 1870. No writer recalled that, as all historians admit, the Papacy had got its States by the most blatant of mediæval forgeries (the Donation of Constantine, etc.) or the fact that the inhabitants had repudiated the Pope's rule by thirty to one. None reflected on the character and apostasies of the quaintest ally that the Papacy had had since the seventeenth century. None pointed out that the Duce had sold, not only his own convictions, but also the freedom of conscience of more than 10,000,000 Italians, who were now to be sent to jail for from five to ten years if they criticized the Holy Church, and who must hand over all their children to the priests.

It was, in fact, one of the most tainted bargains of modern times and a fit inauguration of a decade of increasing corruption. By the Treaty which was first signed the Pope got his £19,000,000 and 108 acres of Rome to convert into a free principality (the Vatican City). By the Concordat which followed he got control of the entire educational system of Italy except the universities, and at once instituted compulsory religious teaching. He got Catholicism established as the religion of the State, a large annual contribution to the clergy, a complete service of paid chaplains in the army and all public institutions, the recognition of the bodies of monks and nuns as juridical personalities with an indefinite

power to accumulate property, the enforcement of religious marriage, truculent penalties upon all criticism of the Catholic religion in print or orally, substantial relief from taxation for the clergy and ecclesiastical property, the recognition of the Church's Holy Days as legal holidays, and, in a particularly venomous clause, the expulsion of ex-priests (of whom there were hundreds) from teaching and all branches of the civil service. This did not satisfy the Pope. He wanted the whole Canon Law, as I described it, incorporated in civil law: the suppression of any other than the Roman religion, the full control of marriage by the Church, the control of the universities, and so on. Mussolini's followers refused to tolerate this; and he had to assure them that he would check the Pope's zeal in exploiting some of his concessions, as he in fact did.

The son of an atheist working-man had sold, for the security of his princely position, the freedom for which his country had fought and sacrificed for 130 years, and he attempted to save his face by deriding liberty and the Mazzinis and Garibaldis who had led the struggle for it. What had the Pope sold? The last shred of a title to be considered a moral power or moral guide. He had seen Mussolini and his Blackshirts, after two or three years of bloody and vulgar brawling, enter into an alliance with the army—four generals walked in the "March upon Rome"—and destroy the Constitution of his country. He had since seen a penal code of a quite savage severity used for the silencing of Mussolini's critics. He had seen tens of thousands sent to jail or exile and hundreds murdered. He knew, as he soon afterwards confessed, that Mussolini was still a heretic and was just using religion to protect his usurped power. Above all, he knew, as we shall see, that Mussolini was

openly organizing the nation for aggressive war and pouring the dregs of his picturesque but vulgar oratory upon the ideal of peace, for which the Church professed to have the most profound regard. Yet through all the outrages, even the appalling rape of Abyssinia, he has, with the money-bag under his arm, supported the adventurer.

When it is suggested that the Pope overlooked much in view of Mussolini's "regeneration" of Italy, we draw attention to facts that were well within the Pope's knowledge. In the most scholarly work on the subject in our language, Professor Herman Finer's *Mussolini's Italy*, we have ample proof that the Fascist rule has been a failure morally as well as economically.<sup>1</sup>

To the claim that the Duce raised up Italy from some supposed decadence, he replies that "the rulers are elevated, but the people palpably degraded" (p. 539). Italy "is being demoralized," he says, and Fascism has produced "nothing new and valuable in any branch of art" (p. 548). But he misses a point which vitally concerns us here. Crime has nearly doubled since Mussolini usurped power. In 1923-4 there were 507,393 convictions for crime. The number rose to 897,505 in 1927, and remains at an average of about 800,000. The new "political" crimes do not, on any estimate of their number, account for one-fortieth of this increase. It is an outcome of Mussolini's glorification of violence—"It is moral, I tell you, profoundly moral," he said at a Congress—and training in callousness.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the place to examine its economic result, but I suggest to the interested reader that he should consult the official Italian statistics in successive numbers of the *Statesman's Year Book*. He will find that the national income has sunk, in spite of a rapidly rising population, by 2,000,000,000 lire since 1922, the national debt has risen from 72,574 million lire to considerably more than 100,000 million, and every branch of production has slowed down.

The beautiful harmony which our Press had so gracefully saluted lasted three months. The Treaty and Concordat were signed on February 11th. On May 13th Mussolini, faced with the revolt of his followers, made in the Chamber a speech which sent the Vatican City into convulsions. He had "made no concessions." He had not "Vaticanized Italy." He had "not resuscitated the Pope's temporal power, but had buried it." He would see that the Church did not control marriage and would not compel non-Catholic children to have religious instruction. "In this field," he cried, "we are intransigent: education must be *ours*." He would keep the clergy in order, guarantee freedom of conscience, and see that the city of Rome should "not be closed to the currents of new ideas and to the acquisition of modern thought." I translate these sentences from the published speech.

He made several speeches on the same note, and on May 30th the Pope was stung into replying. He published in the *Osservatore Romano* (the Papal and Jesuit organ) a long letter to his Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri. It has never been translated, for it shows the Pope, in the year 1929, fierily insisting upon claims which Catholic apologists in England and America were representing as abandoned. I have translated much of the letter (or essay) from the *Osservatore*, and will here give a few short passages. They are painful reading to those non-Catholics who are deluded by English apologists for the Church. We need not mind that Mussolini's words were denounced as "heretical, and worse than heretical." Some of them literally were. The Pope knew well all the time that he was dealing with an apostate. He angrily rejected the statement that no concessions had been made to the Church and that the State would still control the clergy. The Church was

"absolutely superior to the State." Mussolini had said that other religions would be "tolerated." The Pope prefers the word "permitted," but detests both, and he insists that "the logical and juridical consequences" of the establishment of the Church shall be carried out, "especially in the matter of propaganda." In other words, there shall be no freedom of expression. In "matters of conscience"—and the Pope is to decide which are—"the Church alone has competent authority," and therefore "in a Catholic State liberty of conscience and of discussion must be understood and carried out in accordance with Catholic teaching and law." In other words, as we saw in the third chapter, they must be suppressed. He makes this clear when he goes on to claim that under the Concordat any discussion of religion, written or oral, which might "easily mislead the good faith of the less enlightened" must be punished by law. As to education—Mussolini had recently repeated in a speech his familiar cry that Italy was to "breed and train a race of conquerors"—the Church would absolutely control it :

The full and perfect right to educate does not belong to the State, but to the Church, and the State cannot impede or restrict it in the exercise and fulfilment of its right or confine it to the subsidized teaching of religious truth.

In fine, if Mussolini did not behave himself, the Pope would repudiate the Treaty and bring about "the fall of the State which is dependent upon Vatican City for its being." It is a useful admission, or boast, of the Pope's share.

The Duce met arrogance with arrogance, but the course of the quarrel and the shifty compromises which were evolved do not interest us. All through 1930 and 1931 Italy seethed with the quarrel. Books and periodicals

appeared with anti-Papal caricatures that almost reminded one of the suppressed *Asino*. "Down with the Pope" was heard in the streets, while the Pope angrily cried that Mussolini and his followers were not Catholics; that they published "inventions, lies, and calumnies" about the Church, and that they permitted "a vast and impudent Protestant propaganda" in Rome itself. "I seem to have allied myself with Satan," the Pope said.

In the latter part of 1931 Mussolini became alarmed. His regime was a failure economically, and all classes were suffering privations—the number of university students fell by 10,000—so he made an unstable peace. Catholic associations for the young were permitted, and the Fascist oath now for the first time included the word God. Criticism of the Church was violently suppressed, and in February, 1932, the leading Fascists shuddered to see Mussolini kneeling before the altar in St. Peter's and being blessed by the Pope. In spite of the most persistent use of the power of the Fascists, whose reward is lucrative service in the administration and the army, the Fascist party grew but slowly. At the end of 1934 it still counted less than 3,000,000 adult and child members; if, as we ought, we decline to count teachers (who are all bound by an oath of loyalty to Mussolini), civil servants, and the members of recreational and athletic associations. Yet, since the Duce was preparing the nation for war, he must have some sort of unity, and the Pope's 70,000 priests were, as Napoleon had found, a useful "spiritual gendarmerie."

#### § 4. *The Rape of Abyssinia*

It would be quite inaccurate to imagine all Italy cowering at the feet of the Pope. The output of Italian literature during the last few years contains many im-

portant books of which the Vatican must strongly disapprove. Large numbers of the leading Fascists still scorn the Pope and his creed, and the ten million or more seceders have by no means returned to the Church. But they have generally had imposed upon them a galling restraint and a duty to support a Church which they regard as false and deeply injurious to the interests of the race. When the revolution comes—for the deep economic distress and terrible military burden must surely lead to one—the Church in Italy will be destroyed. Fascism and Romanism are vitally interdependent in that country.

If any person can regard this use of the jail and the lash to impose the Catholic faith upon a reluctant people as, in any decent sense of the word, a moral or spiritual victory, let him consider closely the type of character which Mussolini is professedly building, with the Pope's reluctant but consistent support. From the first the Duce proclaimed a gospel of force, violence, and war of conquest. A new Roman Empire was to arise. Little girls read in their Balilla catechism how Italy was to recover Nice, Corsica, Malta, the eastern shore of the Adriatic, and so on. The dream has grown to the proportions of insanity as Mussolini found the world ready to accept, formally, his occasional opportunist professions of peace. And from the start the Pope knew this. In the hours of bitter quarrel he used to denounce sourly Mussolini's "race of conquerors" and his "statolatry" (a word invented by the Pope). But he never gave Italy one single dignified and effective protest. His 70,000 priests worked in the schools in co-operation with teachers who were debauching the minds of the children with a glorification of the sword, of conquest, of callousness to bloodshed. He himself sent pretty messages to

England and America about the Prince of Peace, and he silently looked upon the corruption of the Italian people and the preparation of Europe for a conflict of aggressive greeds and ambitions in which all idealism would be trampled into the mud. So he was dragged into sharing responsibility for one of the gravest outrages of our time : the rape of Abyssinia.

I am not in this work relying upon suspicions of the kind of intrigue and secret agreements which can never be satisfactorily proved. Therefore I say nothing about the statement that Mussolini held out the inducement of bringing the whole Abyssinian Church into subjection to the Pope, though a man must be strangely unacquainted with the policy of the Vatican to imagine that it was indifferent to this. The known facts suffice. The Pope and the Italian hierarchy supported what Mussolini has—quite clownishly—called “the most glorious victory in history.” Cardinal Schuster, the national head of the Italian Church, enthusiastically hailed the war in Abyssinia as “a holy war,” “a righteous war.” Bishops and priests everywhere supported it. Italy was flooded with picture-postcards, some of which showed the magnificent resources of gold, oil, wheat, etc., which they were acquiring, while others showed Mussolini’s tanks bearing statues of the Virgin and the saints to the benighted Ethiopians.

Does anybody imagine that the whole Italian Church, with Cardinal Schuster at its head, enthusiastically co-operated with the Fascist authorities against the will of the Pope? Yet our Press and literature are already admitting the myth that the Pope at least maintained a dignified and rebuking silence. Catholic apologists who on one page tell their readers how Popes never compromise or restrain their moral indignation, ask us here to regard silence as courage. But he was not silent.



After the war had proceeded a few months an American journal sent Edward Price Bell to Rome to get an authoritative declaration from the Pope. The article he wrote was a painful monument of the ingenuity of that able journalist. He made the surprising statement that when he reached the Vatican he was warned that he must put the Pope's sentiments in his own (Mr. Bell's) words, not attribute any words to the Pope. All that he gives the reader is a paragraph in praise of peace taken from an earlier speech of the Pope before the war started.

The Pope had, as a matter of fact, already spoken and had plainly enough defended the rape of Abyssinia; but his words caused such painful astonishment amongst the Catholics of England, France, and the United States that he turned to the policy of silence and let the Italian prelates, whose activity was not reported abroad, carry out his share of his sinister compact with Mussolini. His first pronouncements were Delphic. On July 28th he had to give a eulogy of an Italian prelate who had worked in Abyssinia, and he very briefly said, though the war was now quite inevitable, that he "still hoped for peace" and was quite sure "that nothing will happen except in accordance with truth, justice, and charity." On August 28th, when the war was definitely in train, he addressed a body of Catholic nurses. There was talk abroad, he said, of "a war of conquest," which would be unjust, but in Italy men said that it was a defensive war against Ethiopian aggression and to acquire territory for the overcrowded population of Italy. If these pleas were sound, he still hoped (while the troops were on the sea in their tens of thousands) that some way—"I do not know what way," he said—would be found other than war to secure Italy's interests.

Some papers read this one way and some another, and

the Pope had a note put in the *Osservatore* (August 20th) saying that to take territory from others to provide for your surplus population was "not by itself a ground for war," but that "defence can very well by itself alone be justified," though it must not become "an excess of defence."<sup>1</sup> The august lips then closed, and the Catholic Press abroad was able to claim that the Pope had never agreed. But the Italian Catholics read his words in the way he knew they would. The Duce said that it was a defensive war, and the Pope said defence was just. The whole Church enthusiastically supported it. Foxy to the end, the world's great moral oracle had the bells of St. Peter's rung to call the people to the *piazza* for the final announcement of victory on October 1st, but St. Peter's was not illuminated and every other church was. And the entire Italian hierarchy ordered prayers for God's blessing on "Italy's rulers and her glorious army, which once more is used in defence of the Christian civilization." We seem to remember the Italian army taking the Papal States for the Pope, but not that the Italians ever took part even in the Crusades.

<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, July 29th, August 29th, August 30th, 1935.

## CHAPTER V

### COLLAPSE OF THE CHURCH IN GERMANY

ON the day on which I open this third Chapter of Rome's record in contemporary life the Press reports an episcopal pronouncement which grotesquely illustrates the falseness and confusion of the instruction given to the public about these matters. The Bishop of Chelmsford had said that "it might be a good thing if some of the bishops and clergy were shot in this country." To the demand for an explanation he replied that he had had in mind "the terrible persecutions to which the Churches in Russia, in Spain, in Germany, and other countries have been subjected, and also the pitiful submission of the Church in Italy to the secular authority." Whether a Catholic would admit that to be a correct description of the situation in Italy one may doubt, but at least the Pope had chosen his own fate. The persecution of religion in Russia was admitted years ago by the heads of the Russian Church to be a libel; while of "other countries" I presume that only Mexico could be named, and we shall see that the charge is false.

As to Germany, we shall presently see that the suggestion that there is a "terrible persecution" of the Churches in that country is preposterous; but there is another aspect of the matter. If the Bishop of Chelmsford is prompted by this reflection on the persecution of religion in other countries to wonder whether a spell of it might not be useful to the Churches here, he must necessarily mean

that in those other countries persecution has braced the Churches. Where? Certainly not in Russia or Mexico, where the Churches are in ruins. And what such language can possibly mean if it is applied to Spain is incomprehensible. Before the rebellion the Church was neither persecuted nor strengthened, and, if one's aim is to show that persecution is beneficial, it would be meaningless to point to the burning of churches and killing of priests during the war in Spain.

This whole idea that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians" is based upon a version of early Christian history which ecclesiastical historians have themselves thoroughly discredited. The only really general persecution was that under the Emperor Diocletian, and of 20,000 Christians at Rome in those years scholars find only a few score who did not sacrifice to the gods or bribe an official to say that they had done so.

But the most astonishing aspect of such pronouncements is that the clerics who make them and the orators who repeat them not only represent every kind of retaliation upon a Church for political interference as a "terrible persecution," but they placidly ignore all the persecution that is exercised by the Churches themselves. The Church of Rome is back at its policy of persecution in Italy, and no one knows how many of the tens of thousands who have suffered in the past seven years fell simply under the law against criticism of religion. The Roman Church in Poland has, we shall see, directed a real and very harsh persecution of the members and clergy of the Orthodox Church. The Roman Church in Austria has vilely treated its critics since 1933, and the 24,000 Socialists and Communists who are in the jails of Vienna to-day are victims, as we shall see, of an especially Church-guided State. Does any Bishop doubt what will happen if the

rebels win in Spain? It is the acknowledged law of the Roman Church that it shall persecute, and it does so wherever it can ally itself with military and political forces that are strong enough to protect it; whereas until these latter days, when patience is exhausted, it has been the almost universal practice of humanitarians to spare the Church in the event of a successful revolution or merely to exclude it from political action.

### § 1. *Stupendous Losses*

The situation in Germany is peculiar, and it is never made clear to the public because in order to do so one has to admit that Christianity has suffered immense losses in that country. A short time ago a very serious attempt was made, we shall see, to bring about a reconciliation between Hitler and the heads of the Roman Church in Germany. The Minister of Education then protested to the Führer that there was no need for reconciliation with the Churches, "which he alleged to have lost their power over men's minds in many parts of the world."<sup>1</sup> As far as the Catholic Church is concerned—and we are concerned here with that alone—the words of the Minister are remarkably true to the facts. Most people are deeply puzzled by the conflict of the Nazis with the Catholics in Germany, because they find in our reference-books that Catholics are one-third of the population, or number more than 20,000,000. How can a statesman who is preparing his country for aggressive war defy one-third of the population, and in regard to what they are supposed to treasure more than anything else? The truth is that the statistics of religion which appear in our encyclopædias

<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, November 13th, 1936.

and annuals are farcical. Editors who are meticulous to the last ton in giving statistics of the coal or wheat produced, or the amount of imports and exports, give figures of religious membership in the leading countries which are tens of millions astray. There are not 20,000,000 Catholics in Germany to-day, but something like 10,000,000. The Roman Church in that country has lost about 10,000,000 in the last twenty years and continues to lose. It is in ruins. Of this we have very definite evidence.

In 1909 I showed that it was generous to estimate the number of Catholics at 20,000,000 and moderate to speak of 5,000,000 seceders; and I quoted German Catholic writers admitting a heavy loss. Let us assume—we must not forget the larger birth-rate amongst Catholics—that they did number about 20,000,000 at the beginning of 1919. In spite of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and other provinces, the Catholic population ought to-day to be well over 20,000,000, but the figures of the last free election (1932) in Germany show that it is only about 10,000,000, or at the most 12,000,000.

These electoral statistics are more reliable as indications of creed in Germany than in any other country. The Catholics had their own political organizations and candidates for the Reichstag, and the Vatican, which has always taken a special pride in the political organization of the Church in Germany, sternly insisted that Catholics should support them alone: the Bavarian People's Party and, for the rest of Germany, the Centre Party. For the Communist Party, which is outspokenly opposed to every Church, no Catholic would vote; and, although Social Democracy has in recent years modified its hostility to religion, it is under the ban of the Church, and only a few lukewarm or nominal Catholics would

support it.<sup>1</sup> I am aware that some did vote for it in the election of November, 1932, but against these we must put a large body of Catholics who had already seceded to the Nazi Party. At that date, we shall see, no real Catholic could vote for the apostate Hitler, for the Pope had not yet changed his policy, and the German Catholics were bitterly opposed to Hitler and dreaded the chance of his being victorious. In these circumstances the analysis of the voting gives us a better indication of the state of Catholicism than the analysis of any other figures could possibly do.

The two Catholic parties together polled, with the aid of the Jews, 5,326,583 votes, which is little more than one-seventh of the total vote (35,148,470). The Communists and Socialists—the most emphatic anti-Catholics—together polled 13,232,292 votes, or considerably more than one-third of the whole. The Nazis, who were still under the strict ban of the Church, polled 11,739,391 votes. That is to say, the parties which were at that time most fiercely assailed and denounced by the whole Catholic hierarchy polled nearly 25,000,000 votes to the Catholic 5,000,000. Socialism and Communism had detached millions of Catholic workers and their families. If we care to conclude that the bodies which supply one-seventh of the votes are about one-seventh of the population, we get the figure of about 10,000,000 Catholics or, allowing for large families, let us say not more than 12,000,000. An equal number must have seceded in the last twenty years.

<sup>1</sup> In Emil Ritter's (Catholic) *Der Weg des politischen Katholizismus in Deutschland* (1934) the Catholic voters enumerated include nominal or seceded Catholics. On the other hand, he says (p. 257) that large numbers of non-Catholics voted for Catholic candidates in 1932. The Jews were directed to do so, and in Berlin the Centre Party adopted a Jewish candidate. The total of Catholics which I deduce from the figures is, therefore, a maximum.

§ 2. *How Hitler Duped the Vatican*

After the 1932 election the policy of the Vatican changed entirely, and German Catholics now complain, sometimes in language that is far from respectful, that Hitler would not have triumphed if the Pope had not imposed his blunder upon their Church. The course of events may be shortly traced. Hitler himself is, as most people know, an apostate Catholic like Mussolini and Goebbels. His father, the illegitimately-born son of an Austrian peasant, a rollicking and very intemperate man, married a woman with money enough to buy for him a humble position in the customs' service. For his third wife he chose a servant girl of the district who had been for ten years in Vienna, in some employment which the historian cannot trace. Adolph went in his adolescence to Vienna, with some dream of becoming an artist, but he failed and became a house-painter and labourer. Study in Vienna made an end of his creed, but substituted for it the almost equally fantastic creed of Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Under the spell of this glorification of the German race he went to Munich, became a German, fought in the war with such bravery that he became a corporal, and returned to Munich as a kind of police-spy. There he found a very small group who called themselves the German Workers' Party. He took the lead and converted the handful of beer-house politicians into the National (*Nazi*-onal) Socialist German Workers' Party. It was Adolph's first flamboyant gesture. They numbered about a score of the 20,000,000 workers of Germany.

How he and his band, fired by the success of Mussolini, began a melodramatic march upon Berlin and at once found themselves in jail does not concern us, but it was in the leisure of his jail-days that he conceived and began



to write in *Mein Kampf* the whole programme of his National Socialism, and there is one part of this programme that it is very material to bear in mind in connection with the Pope's recent vigorous efforts to "co-operate with him in destroying Bolshevism."

Hitler usually excuses his monstrous construction of armaments on the ground that Soviet Russia has designs on Germany. For the last twelve years he has, on the contrary, urged Germany to conquer Russia and take over its mighty resources. In a tactical French interview he explained away this as a dream of his youth, but *Mein Kampf*, with a thirty-page chapter on this subject, ending in a fiery exhortation to Germany to take the sword and "follow in the footsteps of the Teutonic Knights"—quite the most savage of the mediæval Knights, by the way—is fresh in almost every home in Germany and is presented to every newly-married couple. In fact, impulsive references to Russia's resources, which the Russian Geological Survey now reports to be the greatest in the world, in Hitler's recent speeches fully betray his designs. What is worse is that an equally lengthy chapter of *Mein Kampf* explains that all this is "only a preparation for the complete destruction of France," which is to be effected under cover of an opportunist alliance with England.<sup>1</sup>

I premise this short account of Hitler's origin and aims because we must understand clearly the Pope's attitude. In the case of both Mussolini and Hitler he knew quite well that the glamorous story which is now current, of young men of genius setting out to save their country from demoralization, is ridiculously false. Such

<sup>1</sup> The supposed translations of *Mein Kampf* into English and other languages conceal all these things on the pretext of "abridgment." Hitler takes legal action against any who issue literal translations, especially of the two chapters to which I have referred.

considerations are in any case quite alien from his mind. From end to end of this book we shall find him pursuing the interests of his Church and using the foulest of implements to promote them whenever he finds it expedient.

In spite of his neurotic oratory—like Mussolini, he really has the gift of the orator, but lack of discipline and the political need to exaggerate spoil it—Hitler had at the end of 1929 only 179,000 followers, mainly (as we have since painfully realized) men drawn by the promise of office and of the spoliation of the Jews. What converted this small body into a vast national movement in two or three years was simply the world-depression. It is part of the mythology that fills our literature that the Nazis saved or regenerated Germany. It is exactly the contrary. From 1924, when the French modified the harshness of their policy, to 1929 Germany prospered and received hundreds of millions in loans from England, America, and France. The sudden cessation of this stream of gold at the end of 1929 caused increasing distress and confusion in Germany, and the Nazi Party grew rapidly and entered, as in Italy, into a murderous struggle with Communists, Socialists, and, in this case, Jews and Catholics.

In the November election of 1932 the Nazis made their supreme effort, and I have told the result. The Catholics were still violently opposed to Hitler, but F. von Papen, the Catholic aristocratic political adventurer, now rendered great service to the Nazis. As he narrowly escaped murder by the Nazis in the ghastly "Blood Purge" of 1934, some try to cast doubt upon his activities in the critical period at the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933. But he himself boasts of it in an address to Catholic workers at Cologne on November 9th, 1933. "Providence," he unctuously says—he speaks throughout

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as a devout Catholic—"destined me to render an essential service in the birth of the government of the national regeneration."<sup>1</sup> He refers, he says, to the part he played in securing the Chancellorship for Hitler on January 30th, 1933.

The rapid train of events, as summarized in our impartial *Annual Register*, which led to the Pope's intervention is that in the summer of 1932 Von Papen induced the senile President to dismiss Brüning from the Chancellorship and appoint himself. Brüning was a Catholic and one of the best statesmen Germany produced in those troubled years, and he had dealt severely with the Nazis. Von Papen was, therefore, strongly condemned by the Catholics, and approached nearer to Hitler. In the November election Hitler had, as I said, secured nearly 12,000,000 votes, but this was less than a third of the electorate, and there was a deep reaction. "Hitler's exchequer was empty, and distrust and dissatisfaction grew rife in the ranks of his followers" (p. 167). The *Times* says the same. Von Papen had soon been replaced in the Chancellorship by General von Schleicher, another Catholic, whose policy was to conciliate the Communists and Socialists in order to meet the Nazi menace. He made public the fact that the aristocratic Prussian landowners had been guilty of financial corruption, and Von Papen secured an alliance of these and the industrialists with the Nazis—on condition that Hitler dropped his pretence of Socialism—and got Hitler appointed Chancellor instead of Schleicher. This, he expressly says, is the glorious work which Providence gave him to do.

But the Nazis were still not sure of victory unless the

<sup>1</sup> *Der* 12 November, 1933, p. 7. The speech is an appeal to Catholics to support the Nazis at the forthcoming election (November 12th).

Catholic opposition was weakened, and this is the part of Von Papen's pious work which chiefly concerns us. The Pope had long been very painfully hesitant between the Scylla of Socialism and Communism and the Charybdis of Nazism. Hitler was an outspoken apostate—Konrad Heiden quotes him in his *History of National Socialism* as saying at this time: "We do not want any other God than Germany itself"—and his chief followers were truculent anti-Christians. However, the Italian Fascists had begun in exactly the same way, yet the Pope had got a most favourable Concordat from them. When, therefore, Von Papen came to Rome with an offer of a liberal Concordat from Hitler, the Pope agreed. The alternative was a possible victory of the Bolsheviks, at the prospect of which he shuddered.

The *Annual Register* (1933) does not give the negotiations with Rome, but it makes this comment on the Nazi "triumph" at the polls in March:

This success in South Germany was all the more astonishing as on the election day the government locally was not yet in their hands, and all parties had complete liberty to publish whatsoever propaganda they planned. *The gigantic swing-over of the Catholic middle-class in West and South Germany to the Nazi Party broke the power of the old middle-class Catholic parties, the Centre and the Bavarian People's Party* (p. 169).

How the burning of the Reichstag by the Nazis helped them to win the election is well known and does not concern us here. It is the "gigantic swing-over" of Catholics that I have to explain, and it is no secret that the Pope ordered the German bishops to instruct their people to abandon hostility to Hitler.<sup>1</sup> German Catholic

<sup>1</sup> See a Catholic article, "Le Catholicisme et la politique mondiale," in the (Catholic) *Revue des Deux Mondes*, January 15th, 1935.

writers bitterly complain of this, and the course of events plainly evinces it. At the end of January (1933) Von Papen discharged his providential mission, got Hitler appointed Chancellor, and induced the industrialist (and royalist) Protestant leader Hugenberg to co-operate with him. It was chiefly this act of the Catholic von Papen that led to the Nazi victory. It enabled Hitler and his colleagues to begin at once to suppress the Communist and Socialist papers all over Germany, paralyse their electoral propaganda, and imprison many of their leaders. No Catholic papers seem to have been suppressed, and, while all other opposition leaders were forbidden to broadcast, the Catholic leader Brüning was permitted to address vast audiences. He, it is true, expressed apprehension about the Constitution, but he offered the support of the Centre Party to the Nazi or any other government that would maintain it. In short, this tyrannical Nazi grip on all means of education, which Providence (or the Pope) had directed Von Papen to secure, enabled the Nazis to drench the country with alarms of Communist plots and arsons, and at the same time give the most soothing assurances of Nazi moderation. Hitler's speeches (as reported in the *Times*) breathed no menace to the Jews, and said that his first concern was peace and the second prosperity. He "double-crossed" everybody: Hugenberg, who was openly saying that the imperial family was now to be restored; Hindenburg, whom he assured that he would respect the Constitution; the Pope, to whom he gave the Concordat which he had promised, but violated its most treasured clauses before the end of the year; and the German people, to whom he promised peace and a prosperity which has become a mockery.

The Concordat with the Vatican, the essential part of which is that Catholic associations and schools shall be

respected, was signed, and the Pope and the German prelates had no word of condemnation of the vile outrages that were perpetrated by their new allies. I need not enlarge on these. The massacre of thousands of Jews, Socialists, Communists, etc., the torture of further thousands, the theft of the fortunes or means of livelihood of a quarter of a million Jews, the horrors of the concentration-camps—by the end of the year there were “on a conservative estimate,” the *Annual Register* says, 100,000 in them—the vile use everywhere of whips, truncheons, and castor oil, the revolting claim that all this was done in order to purify the noble German race of adulterations, will one day cause sociologists and historians to wonder if the race was civilized in the twentieth century. What concerns us is that the Pope and the German Church helped to enthrone this brutality and refused to condemn its outrages. Even when they found that Hitler was forced by his leading followers to violate the terms of the Concordat and coerce Catholics, they whined only about their own interests and religion. A series of sermons preached by Cardinal Faulhaber, the leader of the German Church, in December, 1933, has been published in English (*Judaism, Christianity, and Germany*), and you will read in them no condemnation of the sufferings that were at that very time being inflicted upon the Jews.

For the Pope still hoped to secure the interests of his Church. On June 30th, 1934, occurred the new and almost unprecedented outrage of “the Blood Purge.” Hundreds were murdered without trial, and the victims included “Strasser, Schleicher, and a number of other Catholic leaders.”<sup>1</sup> The Nazis laughed at the Pope and his Concordat. In Bavaria, especially, the bishops

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1934, p. 188

thundered, not about the degradation of their country, but about the interference with their schools and the seduction of tens of thousands of men from the Church by offers of work. The Pope would not yield and sacrifice his Concordat, so in 1936 the Nazis found a new and terrible weapon against the Church, and the Pope now began to talk about his eagerness to co-operate with Hitler in crushing Russia.

### § 3. *Spectacular Exposure of Clerical Morals*

One of the chief purposes I have in writing this book is to warn English readers how our press and literature are so effectively bullied by Roman Catholic organizations that the public are totally misled in regard to the life and aims of the Church. What we have already seen may have done much to convince the reader of this, but I have now to tell of the suppression, by Catholic influence, of one of the most dramatic and astounding events of the year 1936. I notice that our literary output of the last five years includes thirty or forty works on the Franciscan monks. In all these, particularly in the English version of Alexandre Masseron's work, *The Franciscans* (1931), the fragrant piety, the courageous self-sacrifice, the tender spirituality of the sons of St. Francis are lyrically commended. And the sordid truth is that the Nazis removed the veil from monastic life in one province of the Franciscan Order in Germany and discovered a corruption that would be regarded as incredible if it were described in a mediæval chronicle. Had this corruption been detected amongst the Buddhists of China, the Jains of India, or the Muslim of Syria, our press would have put it on the level of our "constitutional crisis." But it was in one of the most

Catholic provinces of the Catholic world, and the editors who, when it first broke, made brief references to it were promptly closed.

One of the reasons given to the world by Hitler when, in the purge of his party (really for revolt) in 1934, he had a number of his oldest friends murdered, was that he had shuddered to find the central body of the Nazi Party infected with unnatural vice. This practice has been painfully common in Berlin and Munich from the beginning of the century—it was far more open and flagrant in Berlin before the War than since—and the idea that Hitler had just discovered it is absurd. But few knew that the brown-robed monks who trod the streets or lanes with shaven polls and sandalled feet were more addicted to it than any class in Berlin. This, however, all Germany learned in the summer of 1936. I find no record of the number of Franciscan monks in the province of Westphalia, but since there are only 2500 in the whole of Germany, Belgium, and Holland, there can be only four or five hundred in the single province of Westphalia. Of these the police arrested 276 on a charge of sodomy (or in a few cases of seducing feeble-minded girls), and 50 others confessed their guilt by fleeing across the border. Possibly some of our English monasteries shelter a few of these “bitterly persecuted” exiles.

I followed the short daily report of the trials, which began in May, in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, one of the most respectable of German papers, for a month (June 23rd to July 21st), until—apparently—the influx of foreign visitors for the Olympic Games made it expedient to discontinue publication, and a German friend sent me local papers for several days with longer accounts of the trials. The judicial proceedings in the High Court of Coblenz, a Catholic city, were unimpeachable. Indeed,



most of the friars admitted their guilt and bore witness against each other. All were found guilty, though some escaped punishment under the amnesty law of 1934. The rest were sent to jail, as common felons, for, generally, one to four years. Their excuses were worse than their practices. Some of them pleaded drunken orgies on feast-days (the Pope's Holy Days), and even confessed to having committed the crime on the way to the Midnight Christmas Mass (*Westfälischer Courier*, June 29th). Some were over the age of 60, and confessed to years of the practice in all the monasteries of the province. One pleaded that, being seduced into it as a novice, he had told his novice-master in confession of the extent of the practice, and was told just to confess his sins and say no more. The novice-master was amongst the accused and was found guilty.

The reader may please himself if he chooses to think that just one province of the Franciscan Order was thus totally and unspeakably corrupted in some inexplicable fashion, or that the Franciscans alone among the monks of Germany were tainted. But there are two further points. During the three months of the trial—each friar was, of course, tried separately—other scandals broke into the Press. At Aachen a community of friars of a totally different province were arrested and condemned for smuggling on a large scale, and a community of the Dutch friars were involved with them. The Dutch friary was on one side of the frontier, the German friary on the other, and for six years they had smuggled into Germany large quantities of wheat (2,316,000 kilos), tea, cigars, etc. One of the friars of this community was arrested on a charge of raping three girls of eight to eleven years old and a boy of nine. A week later a Carmelite nun in a totally different part of Germany was arrested on a vice-charge

(with young boys), and a week after that a priest in another part of Germany.

The second point I would put to those who, because they think it nice to read only the prettier books about the monks, fancy that there must be some peculiar reason for corruption in certain restricted areas, is that there is no such thing as an isolated friary or province of the Order. Most of my readers will know that I once belonged to the Franciscan Order. The rule is the same throughout the world. Every few years the central authorities in Rome send an elderly and experienced friar who knows the local language as "Visitor" to every monastery of every province. Every inmate of each friary has to have a strictly private interview with this Visitor, and he is put under solemn religious promise to tell of any irregularity which he knows to exist in the friary. Moreover, the heads of the friaries are removed every few years from one place to another.

#### § 4. *The Pope Seeks to Co-operate*

In August the English Press curtly announced that the Pope was negotiating with the German Government and that Hitler was believed to entertain the idea of stopping certain trials of priests and nuns "on the charge of smuggling currency." As far as I could ascertain, not a word was said about the appalling exposures of monastic and clerical vice which really explained the Pope's new attitude. The readers were left to admire the touching pictures of Franciscan life in the books which the Press invariably recommended. Picturesque stories of Bolshevik vice were invented, and bishops wept over them. But of this true story of unparalleled corruption, to which the strictest courts and the entire German Press bore

witness during two months, not a word was said. Thus are we instructed to-day.

In Germany itself the exposure shook the whole fabric, or all that was left of it, of the Church. A brown-robed friar became an object of derision everywhere. Catholics were appalled to learn that the priests they had venerated as particularly holy and virtuous had been for years addicted to the most repulsive of vices. The whole of the clergy, as happens in such cases, incurred suspicion. The millions of Nazis of the "pagan" branch used fiery language, and even the suppressed Communists and Socialists found one legitimate outlet for their anger and disdain. No one was now moved by the complaints of terrible persecution of the Church in Bavaria: of Catholic schools transferred to the State, of Catholic workers deprived of relief, and so on.

The Pope moved quickly and desperately. On September 12th, the Nazi organ, the *National Zeitung*, surprised its readers, and angered many, by publishing as an important document a letter written by the Catholic bishops and ordered to be read from all Catholic pulpits on the following day.<sup>1</sup> It was an appeal to Hitler to bury the past and accept their co-operation in "fighting the ever-increasing threat of world-Bolshevism which shows its sinister hand in Spain, Russia, and Mexico." As the Pope used exactly the same terms in an address at Rome a few days later, the order had evidently come from the Vatican. The German bishops added that "guns are not enough to fight the Bolshevik danger: a sound lead is needed to secure victory." And German bishops, unlike English bishops, know the text of *Mein Kampf*. It was to be an aggressive war upon Russia, to get the rich cornfields of the Ukraine, the vast mineral resources

<sup>1</sup> *News-Chronicle*, September 12th, 1936, and other papers.

lately discovered in the Urals, the splendid productive machine which the Russians had laboriously created. The reference to Mexico, both by the Pope and the bishops, is a plain intimation to the United States that the Catholics of that country will be ordered to support it in an invasion of Mexico. It was, we shall see, not the first.

Hitler genuinely wanted to settle the religious strife and unite the country for war-purposes, but his most influential supporters would not tolerate concessions to the Pope. He received Cardinal Faulhaber more or less furtively;<sup>1</sup> but, when the Cardinal pressed for Catholic control of the schools in Bavaria, the Minister of Education contemptuously opposed him, as I have already quoted. The *Times* had stated (November 4th) that Mussolini, who was now on praying terms with the Vatican, was pressing Hitler to come to terms with the Vatican because it would have great power in the "clerical State" which Franco was to set up in Spain, and because it would ease his negotiations with Austria.

The negotiations failed, apparently on the ground put forward by the Minister of Education—that the Church was no longer sufficiently important for the State to sacrifice anything for it—and matters are again in suspense at the time I write. It is an inglorious story, for the Roman Church as much as for the German authorities. The Pope helped them, in spite of their grave crimes and their still graver programme of crime, to attain power. He had helped to put into the saddle the riders of two of the wild horses of the Apocalypse which threaten to tear Europe asunder. He, in the interest of his rights under the Concordat which was his reward, pressed his claims without a word of indignation at the terrible outrages that followed in Germany. And now, just when the whole

<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, November 13th, 1936.

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world is sick with apprehension that the neuropathic German leader is going to bring on a gigantic catastrophe by attacking Russia or annexing Morocco, this supreme moral oracle and representative (he says) of the Prince of Peace storms Hitler with entreaties to be allowed a share in firing the reluctant German people to the combat.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TRAGEDY OF AUSTRIA

THE writing of a work on Papal policy has hitherto been extremely difficult because there was generally, or very frequently, a question of secret intrigue. One had to wait until the *dramatis personæ* were in the grave and writers of reminiscences or biographies had their moments of candour. Need I remind the reader that nowhere in this book do I ask him to suspect some secret or unpublished manœuvre? For statements that may surprise any serious reader I give such authorities as it is customary to respect, but so far we have found the Pope's action in various countries not in the least obscure. I do not agree with the exasperated Catholic writers who declare that this is because he is a simpleton, the dupe of secular statesmen in half a dozen countries. It is rather fanaticism that makes him audacious: not perhaps religious fanaticism in the ordinary sense, but a fanatical devotion to the interests of his Church as an ecclesiastical corporation which frames its own arrogant bill of rights.

When we turn to Austria, there is still less need for conjecture or innuendo. Ever since the War Austria has been a theocracy. It was ruled, until he died in 1932, by a zealous priest, Mgr. Seipel, a man of quite childlike docility to the Vatican. All acknowledge that even in the years when he was not Chancellor, or head of the State, he was the power behind the Chancellor. No important line of policy was traced without the

approval of the Vatican, and no man rose to power who was not loyal to it.

On the other hand, we must not be misled by the well-deserved repute of the Austrians for refinement and courtesy into thinking that the country had had no share in the epic struggle of the nineteenth century which was the opening phase of the present conflict. In the first half of the last century Austria was still one of the great nations of the world, its rule extending from Bohemia and Moravia to the borders of the Papal States in Italy. During the democratic upheavals the jails of this vast region, which were as foul as any in Europe, housed as much suffering as did those of Spain or the Papal States. It is true only that the victims of massacres, murders, and executions were far less numerous; though the brutality perpetrated upon the Hungarians after their revolution in 1848 made Europe shudder, and in the jails there was a form of torture, the *strappado* or bastinado, which strong men so dreaded that many of them committed suicide lest in their agony they might be induced to betray their friends. However, we will not again go back into history. It is enough that even the fine Austrian character stooped to massive brutality in defence of Church and Throne; and we shall now see it so stoop once more, in our own days, though in their hour of triumph the Socialists had made no attempt to persecute.

### § 1. *Socialist Vienna and Catholic Austria*

Scepticism had made very considerable progress in Austria long before the War, though this was mainly among the educated classes. Count Buchner, of the Imperial Court, told me remarkable things about the spread of the revolt against the Catholic faith in his

circle in the first decade of this century. When, however, the War was over, and Austria, rent and beggared in outrageous fashion by the Conference of Versailles, entered upon its new career, it was found that Socialism rapidly recovered and then even more rapidly grew. In the election of 1919 the Socialists proved to be the strongest single party in the country, but they worked with the Christian Socialists, the second strongest party, to clear up the confusion. Mgr. Seipel, professor of Catholic moral theology at the university, was the Counsellor of the Christian Socialist Party, and, while Anti-Socialist Party would have been the better name, for the organization was founded simply to prevent Christians from going over to Socialism, the plight of the country for several years was such that the religious quarrel was in the main suspended. I spent a week at Vienna in 1922 and saw appalling distress. The workers told me, and police officials confirmed this as I went from group to group on the Ring—I was one day in a crowd of workers when the mounted police drew their sabres and started toward us—that half the Viennese workers had an average weekly wage of 1s. 6d. and the other half nothing; and I noticed that bread was as dear as in England.

This misery naturally fed Socialism, and, when Seipel took the Chancellorship himself in 1922 and secured the help of the League of Nations, the recovering city found itself under a Socialist Government. As is well known, they retained control of the city for more than ten years and made it, Mr. J. H. Jackson says in his admirable history of Post-War Europe, "a model city." The large and fine blocks of workers' flats which they erected are known to all; though few know how particularly foul the housing of very many of the Viennese workers had hitherto



been. They were not less successful in the reform and endowment of education, creating one of the finest and most rational systems in Europe; and within the city they instituted maternity clinics, unemployment insurance, pensions, playing-fields for children, and other beneficent innovations. Mr. C. A. Macartney, in his weighty and impartial work, *The Social Revolution in Austria* (1926), says that they "did more to better the condition of the masses than had previous decades of legislation from above." When, in 1934, the clerical-Fascists captured Vienna by force and began to undo the work of the Socialists, the *News-Chronicle* editorially deplored that the new school-manuals of history contained not a single reference to the previous "model of democratic government, as close to the ideal Platonic Republic as the world has ever seen." <sup>1</sup>

The only criticism of the city-government that one reads is that the Socialists did their humanitarian work by means of the loans that were made to Austria. It is a foolish jibe, because Mgr. Seipel and his Government received whatever loans were made to Austria, and would very strictly see that the Socialist administration in Vienna got none of the money for its "godless work." The city raised only one small loan. The work was paid for out of taxation, which certainly fell heavily upon the middle class and the rich, and the financial department was controlled by one of the most competent men in Vienna.

No efforts of the clergy and the Christian Socialists, who unceasingly denounced Social Democracy as anti-Catholic, could change the workers of Vienna, who voted Socialist by a large majority until their freedom was bloodily suppressed. It is material to understand this

<sup>1</sup> February 12th, 1935.

if one is to realize the share of the Church in the final tragedy. Mr. Macartney (Senior Scholar of Cambridge and neither Socialist nor Rationalist) says in the work to which I have referred that Austrian Socialism was anti-clerical before it was anti-capitalistic, and adds :

Even to this day [1926] the real battle of Austrian Socialism is directed against the Church : its domains are the ground which has been wrested or reclaimed from her (p. 54).

When, in 1927, the clerical Government, despairing of argument, began to resort to bloodshed, the workers retorted by further secessions from the Church. Within three weeks after " Bloody Friday " 4173 men and women officially announced that they had left the Church : within the next five months 21,857 gave this formal notice. At the municipal elections a few months earlier the Socialists had increased their vote in Vienna by 120,000 and in the country outside Vienna by 90,000. It is usually said that, industrial towns being so few in Austria, the Socialists were practically confined to Vienna. It is not complimentary to the Church to claim that it lost nearly all the alert workers of Vienna but retained all the rustics. In point of fact, the Socialists polled 830,000 votes outside Vienna in 1927.<sup>1</sup>

In the main, however, the Catholics, who were chiefly organized as the so-called Christian Socialists, held the country outside Vienna, which contained about two-thirds of the population, and so retained the national Government. As soon as the country was relieved of its acute distress they began to persecute. A distinguished Czecho-Slovak lawyer whom I met in Paris in 1924 gave me a copy of a memorandum on the matter which he had

<sup>1</sup> These details are from " Pertinax's " work *Österreich* 1934.

presented to the League of Nations (which ignored it). He gave full and lengthy proof that Seipel's Government were, wherever they could, cruelly persecuting Jews, Protestants, and Rationalists. A priest-statesman, not of the liberal type and genius of Richelieu, but an expert canonist and strict Vaticanist of limited ability, was bound to act thus. But we need not linger over these early years when the splendid success of godless Vienna was, in the eyes of all informed people, putting the national work of the priest-statesman on a far lower level of efficiency.

### § 2. *Dollfuss and the Revolt of the Workers*

Recognizing, as we must, that the tragic struggle which slowly developed in Austria was in very large measure a clash of economic creeds, it was also, and more than in any other country except Spain, a religious struggle. For a few years Seipel impotently watched the steady progress of the Vienna municipality and the discredit of his own supporters. Banking scandals and financial corruption from 1924 to 1926 brought about a new national crisis, and the exposure of the abuses by the Socialists brought down the Government. Seipel returned to the Chancellorship, and set out to unite all other parties against the Socialists. He boasted that all the industrialists and merchants of Austria supported him: upon which the Socialists ironically reflected that his followers ought to change their name to Christian Capitalists. To his great mortification the Socialists, as I said, made more progress than ever at the 1927 elections, taking seven seats from his own party. The clerical answer to this was soon written in blood.

The aristocratic puppet Prince Starhemberg had now

begun to emulate the glorious career of Mussolini and had created the beginning of his Fascist army (the Heimwehr). Seipel and his colleagues encouraged, at least by refusing to act, this ominous development of a private army, and isolated murders soon led up to the terrible events of "Bloody Friday" in Vienna. Seipel attempted a dictatorship, but he was driven from office and again had to direct affairs from the wings of the political theatre. Both sides were now storing arms for the final clash. Seipel's ultimate aim was to create a bloc of Catholic States in Central Europe (an enlarged Austria, Hungary, and the Catholic provinces of Yugo-Slavia and Czecho-Slovakia) which should hold the balance for the Pope between Italy and Germany. The first step in this was to crush the opposition in Austria itself. The police were instructed to seize all Socialist stores of arms which they could detect and not those of the Heimwehr (the Catholic Fascists and royalists), and the Socialists grew more and more embittered and desperate.<sup>1</sup> The confusion was made worse by the rise of a German Nazi Party, inspired by the success of the Hitlerites across the frontier.

"Gallant little Dollfuss," as our sadly-misinformed people came to call this clever Catholic peasant, was made Chancellor (1932) to preside over this new form of Catholic propaganda. In Parliament he usually had a majority of one, and his first Budget showed a deficit of £14,000,000. "The picturesque legend created abroad," says the *Annual Register* (p. 177), "of a united little Austria, headed by its Chancellor, in a gallant fight against destruction by a big German bully bears little relation to fact." There were bomb outrages, assassinations, and raids upon shops every few days. When, in

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1932, p. 202.

1933, the Socialists exposed the fact that Austrian railways were being used to convey Italian arms to Hungary, and Dollfuss, after giving solemn assurance to the Powers that it should cease, allowed it to continue until the Socialist railwaymen again exposed it, the last phase of the battle opened. Dollfuss went to Italy to consult Mussolini—and, of course, to say his prayers in St. Peter's—and it was decided that "the Socialist watch-dog had to be destroyed." That is the language of the impartial *Annual Register*.

The Chancellor closed Parliament, began to govern dictatorially, and in his organ, the *Reichspost*, hailed the scandalous outrages of the Fascist troops as a salutary counter-revolution. He told the French ambassador, to whom he had given, in return for valuable French assistance, a guarantee that he would take no violent action against the Socialists, that he withdrew his promise. A number of Socialist leaders were imprisoned, and the Mayor of Vienna was suspended and the great municipal administration paralysed. He was determined, Dollfuss said, to make Austria "a corporative authoritative State," in accordance with the principles enunciated by the present Pope in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, "while his arbitrary decrees cut the financial arteries supplying the life-blood to the Socialist municipal scheme, and put an end to practically all its building schemes and other welfare activities which had attracted so much interest all over the world" (p. 183).

Starhemberg's private army had in the meantime been allowed practically to take possession of the provincial towns and to raid the Socialist headquarters in Vienna. The ring of steel was drawing closer round the doomed party, while Dollfuss publicly approved the scandalously unconstitutional manœuvres of the Heimwehr. After one

of these speeches Major Fey, chief commander of the Heimwehr, told his men that on the following day they would take the final step of raiding the Karl Marx House and other blocks of workers' flats in which the Socialists had a large store of arms cunningly concealed. The Socialist workers anticipated them, and on February 12th, 1934, opened their pathetic revolt. They were not even united on the scheme, and their rifles could not possibly prevail against artillery. Faithless to the last—few shed a tear outside Austria when, shortly afterwards, he fell a victim to the lawlessness he had fostered—Dollfuss told the world that only 137 of the rebels were killed, but Socialist inquiries showed that between 1500 and 2000 men, women, and children were killed. Eleven leaders were hanged and 1188 of the rebels were imprisoned—to begin with. The *Annual Register* says (p. 194) :

At the cost of hundreds, if not thousands, of lives, great damage to property and heavy outlay of the State, the Heimwehr Fascist movement, which was created—in its final form—by the late Chancellor Mgr. Ignaz Seipel, achieved in 1934 its oft-proclaimed aim of the destruction of the Social Democratic Party, their violent ejection from the control of Vienna to which two-thirds of the population had elected them, the arrest of the leaders, and the sweeping away of parliamentary government in Austria. Thus culminated the anti-Socialist policy inaugurated by the late Mgr. Seipel in 1926.

It adds that "Dollfuss's pretence that he had saved Austria from a Socialist plot was nowhere accepted abroad or (outside its own ranks) in Austria."

### § 3. *Austria in Chains*

The facts which I have given in the last section are of so grave a character that I have in this case confined

myself to borrowing the account of them which is given in the *Annual Register*. Even that usually cold and objective chronicle cannot refrain from occasional expressions of disdain and disgust in narrating the proceedings of Austria's clerical Government. There is something revolting about the long-drawn plot. Ten years of propaganda, aided by all the resources of a State over which a priest presides, completely fail to check the new "Los von Rom" movement. In increasing numbers the people of Vienna choose the creed that does not merely preach, but practises, justice, humanity, and peace. So, since the white hands of the Church must never be sullied with blood, ambitious and ruthless adventurers like Fey and Starhemberg are encouraged to form armies. Not for a moment do I suggest that these men took their inspiration from the Vatican. They were just Fascists, though Catholics, and in the end deadly rivals for the power and wealth that dictatorship brings; and we shed no tears because Rome, having used them, betrayed and ruined them. But it did use them, and to destroy in the Church's interest what all admit to have been a very beneficent piece of social work and sweep away the democratic constitution which Seipel and Dollfuss had taken oath to respect. And, to crown the hypocrisy of it, the blood-stained reactionaries said that they were acting upon the Pope's latest encyclical: the pompous utterance which was being hailed in England and America as the luminous and salutary pronouncement of a man who never interferes in politics and never swerves from the path of justice, honour, and humanity!

Austria remains in the chains which the new type of *condottieri* and their clerical employers rivetted upon it in 1934. For the hundredth time the world got an illustration of the truth which most people so obstinately refuse

to recognize : that the Church and Church-guided State always persecute their critics, and on an appalling scale, when they get the opportunity, yet after a hundred such persecutions the opponents of the Church, whether the Liberal Democrats of a century ago or the more advanced parties of to-day, almost always behave with restraint. "Pertinax" justly says :

The Revolution of 1919 in which the Social Democrats had played the chief part had not hurt a hair of anybody's head. The counter-revolution against this most peaceful and most humane of all revolutions raged brutally against the defeated. Thousands who had supported the Defence Alliance and thousands of Social Democratic functionaries were imprisoned without any cause and kept for months in the overcrowded police-cells.<sup>1</sup>

"Pertinax" errs at one point : when he says that the Austrian revolution against Church and Throne was "the most peaceful and most humane of all revolutions." Just as restrained had been the official behaviour of the Spaniards in 1931 and at six previous revolutionary victories. But, as I said, this is the normal complexion of popular revolutions, and those who try to conceal the fact betray the paltriness of their case when they have to go back to the French Revolution and most grossly to misrepresent the facts of that.

The clerical victors, on the other hand, displayed almost the old savagery. While Cardinal Innitzer, head of the Austrian Church, was put on the wireless to tell the workers how Holy Mother the Church held open her tender arms for them, the jails groaned with the overcrowded and suffering prisoners. At the trials which were later instituted one witness after another insisted that confessions or accusations of other workers had been

<sup>1</sup> *Österreich*, 1934, p. 275.



wrung from him by torture. There were papers which represented that torture is inflicted in modern times only by certain sadistic individuals who are vaguely known as "Reds," but the blunder of the Brazilian police in arresting Viscountess Hastings and her sister and providing us with unimpeachable witnesses opened the eyes of millions. We have seen that there is just as respectable evidence for the use of torture on the defeated Communists, sometimes in the schools of the Christian brothers, in Spain in 1934. We shall see that the *Manchester Guardian* has put beyond question the use of foul torture in the jails of Catholic Poland. No one affects to doubt the use of it on an appalling scale in the concentration camps of Germany—our Catholic censors are willing to let *that* through—and there is thoroughly reliable evidence for it, in this fourth decade of the twentieth century, in the jails of Italy and of pious Bulgaria, Rumania, and Yugo-Slavia.

That a certain section of the Austrian Socialists had rebelled against the Government, in the circumstances I have described, was notorious; but the punishment of the survivors of these alone would have left the Social Democratic body still very powerful. The innocent had, by hook or crook, to be crushed; though they proved in court that, instead of wishing to conspire against the Government, they no less than seventeen times in the critical period 1932 to 1934 made urgent offers to Dollfuss to disarm, if the Fascists and Nazis were disarmed, and to co-operate with him. They testified that the Heimwehr had offered to sell them two guns to encourage them to rebel, and they had refused.

The work proceeded on the traditional lines. By the end of 1934 the police had arrested 19,051 Socialists and Communists, and there are said to be 24,000 political

prisoners in the jails of Vienna to-day. All funds and communal buildings of the workers were seized, and they were subjected to a revolting clerical tyranny. Every Government employee must go to church or be discharged. Every teacher must in addition go to confession every three weeks; and the fine rational system of education which the best experts had created for the Socialist municipality was turned into just such a mush of utterly mendacious history and other tainted matter as the priests impose upon Ireland to-day. Starvation spread again in Vienna with the return of incompetence, but the priests controlled the distribution of food. They at first refused relief funds from abroad, so as to "force those in distress to apply to Catholic organizations," and two Englishmen were arrested for giving money to starving families (*Annual Register*, p. 199). The Pope wills it. To the destruction of their freedom, prosperity, and schemes of social welfare he is indifferent. They shall go to church, and their children shall be crammed with what every non-Catholic educated person in the world calls lies.

## CHAPTER VII

### INTRIGUE IN FRANCE

WHEN we consider the relations of Church and State in France during the last twenty years, we are impressed to find one of those truths from which the attention of the general public is carefully diverted. It is that the Church has had far less influence in that country than in any of its Latin neighbours or in Poland, Austria, and (at a certain critical stage) Germany, yet there is incomparably less to excite our disdain or resentment in the recent history of France than in that of the countries under Papal influence. France and Great Britain are the least religious nations of the civilized world. The authorities of the Church of England have stated, and representatives of other Churches have agreed, that four-fifths of the people of this country do not in any sense come under Church influence. We shall see that France is, and has been for forty years, in the same condition. Yet these are, since the escutcheon of America is blotted with excessive crime and corruption, the two best-behaved of the larger civilized nations.

In France there has been no revival of the mediæval practice of torturing prisoners to compel them to denounce others; no soldiers or armed police herding tens of thousands, without trial, in jails and half-barbaric concentration camps; no organization of military forces for any other than a transparently defensive purpose. France has kept clean its record of moderation after a

series of victories over reaction (1814, 1830, 1848, and 1871) which inspired the world, and it is a grave reflection on our teaching of history that these fine examples of humanity should be ignored, and that the violent conduct of a small minority nearly a century and a half ago should be quoted everywhere to-day as typical of the behaviour of the people.

I told in the first chapter how all the leading authorities now accept the finding of the French experts that in the September Massacres, perpetrated by a few hundred Parisian workers—and presumably Catholic workers, since the aim was to purify Paris—the majority of the victims were convicted criminals or prostitutes, and that the great majority of the victims under the Terror were republican working-men, and the butchery was directed by a lawyer who was a devout believer in God. Let me add that in the White Terror of 1793 and 1814 Catholics slaughtered thousands of republicans, often with great brutality, and that in the royalist-clerical reactions after 1815, 1830, and 1848 more than 100,000, of whom thousands must have died, were thrust into the foul jails or sent to the deadly penal colonies. All this savagery on the part of “refined” Catholic authorities is ignored, and writers who count themselves well educated press upon their readers, as typical, a mendacious version, *à la* Baroness Orczy, of the behaviour of a small minority of uneducated workers a century and a half ago.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The even more fantastic story of the prostitute on an altar does not properly concern me here, but it also has been revived, and its popularity illustrates the value of our public education. The popular version was recently repeated by Mr. Francis Beeding in his novel *The Emerald Clasp*. Speaking of Nôtre Dâme, he says that “here the Paris mob, in blasphemy, throned a naked harlot on the altar as the Goddess of Reason.” The truth, which has been recognized by all authoritative historians for decades, is that the Clergy of Nôtre Dâme had joined the revolutionaries and handed over the Cathedral to the municipal government; that

§ 1. *Alsace-Lorraine Disarms France*

We will not further retire into the past, and I will be content to say that, while the clerical-royalists in their long spells of power before 1870 sent well over 100,000 liberals and anti-clericals to the jails and penal colonies, while the workers and students of Paris sacrificed more than 20,000 lives to dethrone clerical royalism in 1830 and 1848, there were no reprisals on the Catholics. France, ever logical—it is absurd to represent the French as too excitable emotionally to think clearly—drew the pertinent conclusion. It dispensed with its Church and Monarchy. The Church had its last period of influence from 1871 to 1876, when the first appearance of Communism—rather of Communards—had driven large numbers back into a politic and superficial alliance with it. The stupid policy of the Papacy in clinging to royalism and repeatedly insulting the Republic changed all this. Since 1880 hardly any statesman of any distinction in France, and remarkably few of its men of science—Bernard and Pasteur are falsely claimed—have been Catholics. By the end of the century the Republic was entirely “laicized,” as the French say. Religious emblems were banished from the courts, the schools, and all public institutions. The Church was disestablished, and the religious orders were, for political intrigue, suppressed. The great majority of the French people had quitted the Church.

In 1909 I showed by an exhaustive analysis of all

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the Council then decided to hold in it an artistic and very decorous pageant in honour of Liberty and Reason; that the altars were not used but draped; that the lady who was a symbol (not goddess) of Liberty (not Reason) was probably a *prima donna* of the Opera, which arranged the pageant, and was very amply draped; and that she simply recited an ode to Liberty by the first French poet of the time which could be read by Miss Maude Royden from a pulpit to-day.

available statistics that there could not be more than 6,000,000 Catholics in France. My conclusion was so moderate that M. Sabatier, the distinguished Protestant writer, whom no one would accuse of prejudice against Catholics, wrote me that I was far too generous to the Church: that the number of genuine Roman Catholics in France was only about 4,000,000. It is curious that the book in which I made my analysis of Catholic losses, *The Decay of the Church of Rome*, is the only one of my works to which the Church has made any reply; except that there is in the United States, I understand, a work by a priest, which I have not seen, entitled, *The Philosophy of Joseph McCabe*. The answer is a twopenny pamphlet (*The Rationalist as Prophet*) by Father Keating, S.J. But even this flimsy "examination" (so it says) of my 300-page book is just a tissue of abuse, without examining any of the mass of statistics I analysed. I was not aware of its existence until twenty-two years after it was published.

After the War a feverish activity reanimated the despondent body of the Catholics of France. I had in 1904 seen a Congress of Freethinkers at Paris attract 100,000 Frenchmen and win, apparently, the support of all Paris. In 1924 I saw a similar Congress in the same city fail to attract more than a few hundred. What had happened? Professor F. Buisson, the ex-Minister of Public Instruction who had created the secular school-system of the Republic, explained to me that during the War all sects and parties had agreed to suspend controversy and to form the *Union Sacrée* for the defence of the country, and that the Church took the field again as soon as the Armistice was signed. The truth was that Buisson was as reluctant as any other French statesman to discuss with me Alsace-Lorraine and the grave problems

which the annexation of it had brought upon France. They had soon found that the attachment of two provinces which were overwhelmingly Catholic and overwhelmingly German threw them into the arms of the Pope, who very promptly seized his opportunity.

It is true that most of the French people saw no reason to revive the aggressive anti-clericalism of pre-war years, since the situation seemed to have been radically and permanently changed, but it is equally true that even veteran anti-clericals like Clemenceau and Poincaré now heavily discouraged it, on the ground that the safety of France required the Pope's support in Alsace-Lorraine and Syria. It is well known how the whole psychology of the French people was warped for years by the strained anxiety about "security." In 1922 I was in Athens when the news came of the appalling defeat of the Greeks by the Turks in Asia Minor. I was, in fact, in the Legation when the Greek Foreign Minister brought the terrible news—it was successfully concealed from the people for four days to prevent a revolution—and my friend Mr. Shirley Atchley, secretary of the Legation, and one of the most experienced diplomats in that part of the world, told me that the Greek Minister had assured them that the totally unexpected catastrophe—I had been with the Greek army in Adrianople four days earlier—was due to the assistance, in guns, tanks, and officers, which the French had given to the Turks. This was mainly to conciliate the Mohammedan subjects of France in the East, but it was also to win the favour of Catholics in that region, since it was no secret that Kemal Ataturk would destroy the power of the Greek Church as well as of the Mohammedan religion.

The favour and help of the Pope in Alsace-Lorraine were more urgently needed. In the harsh and misguided

period that immediately followed the War the French Government had decided to Gallicize the annexed provinces as speedily as possible. One of the means was to replace the German bishops of Strasbourg and Metz by French bishops. They were men of irreproachable character, not politicians, and universally respected; but Pope Benedict XV obliged the French Government by removing them and consecrating French prelates to take their places. Since the change actually occurred, and could not occur without the intervention of the Papacy, there is here no question of mere suspicion. In fact, there speedily followed negotiations between the French Government and the Vatican which resulted in the appointment, for the first time in decades, of a French Ambassador to the Vatican and of a Papal Nuncio to Paris. There was a fierce dispute in the Senate, where it was said that Briand had sent M. Jonnart to the Vatican without the authority of Parliament. M. Doumergue, later President, fierily voiced the anger of the anti-clerical radicals. It was the Alsatian Catholic Senators who saved the Government and disarmed the Opposition, saying that anti-clericalism was no longer in the interests of France. Mgr. Bonaventura Ceretti was therefore ceremoniously received by the Government as the Papal Nuncio, and the French Church was revitalized.

In 1924 the first and unfortunate stage of post-war politics came to an end, and the new Radical Government proposed to return to an anti-clerical policy. The ambassador was to be withdrawn from the Vatican, the laws against religious orders more strictly applied, and the schools of Alsace-Lorraine were to be so far laicized that Catholic instruction should be given out of school-hours and should not be compulsory. The clergy inspired a violent agitation, and the political opposition, always ready in France



to seize any pretext, joined in it. The Alsatian clergy and deputies were directed to point out that they were by the Concordat entitled to be represented at the Vatican, and the Ambassador must be retained there if only to meet this obligation. In the course of the long and acrid controversy even the sacred franc began to fall; so the Government sullenly yielded to this demonstration of the Pope's power, and France had the novel and painful experience of its President and Premier, both atheists, making official attendance at the elevation of Mgr. Ceretti to the cardinalate. Most English people will hardly understand this, because our Press has obliged the French by suppressing all news of the revolt against France which has seethed in Alsace-Lorraine almost since the annexation. It is this that gave the Pope his opportunity. The Roman Catholic *Tablet* boasted a few years later :

Another example of the disciplined energy of the Catholics of Eastern France is to be found in the network of societies which now covers the extensive dioceses of Nancy and Toul. . . . The bishop, Mgr. Celle, has succeeded in welding together a very powerful organization. . . . Already 50,000 out of 120,000 electors belong to these Catholic societies, while there are at least 20,000 other sympathizers who, for reasons well understood, are not in a position to declare themselves openly. This large body of voters, who constitute a majority of the electorate, will have something to say to the seven deputies to be returned to the new Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Such a clerical organization in Alsace-Lorraine, where there has been a chronic agitation for separation from France, gave the Pope a solid ground for bargaining.

<sup>1</sup> January 21st, 1928, p. 94.

### § 2. *French Catholics Attack the Pope*

Yet this development has, as I said, given the Vatican very poor results. Catholics boast of a new vitality and a great expansion of the Church in France, but most of the French Catholic writers who have closely examined the matter admit that there is no proof that the Church has grown. The Catholic layman André Goddard in his *Surnaturel Contemporain* (1922) describes France in his time as almost wholly materialistic, and it is to other countries (about which he is wildly misinformed) that he looks for the progress of his Church. There never was an age, he says, in which France was "so little interested in truth." The only sign of life is in "the groups of young Catholics," and we shall see presently how these made the Papacy shudder.

In the same year Georges Goyau made a detailed inquiry (*L'effort Catholique dans la France d'aujourd'hui*). He tells of new churches, new activity of the clergy, and a rise in the number of communicants; but he warns us in regard to the last that a certain diocese found that only one in ten persevered. He also boasts of the enthusiasm of the young; though we are not much impressed when he says that in a nation of 42,000,000 people the Catholic Association of French youth and the Catholic Trade Unions have only 140,000 members each! In the end Goyau has to leave it open "whether there are in France to-day ten million practising Catholics, as some say, or only five millions, as others say." The Franco-American Catholic Denis Gwynn says (*The Catholic Reaction in France*, 1924) that he cannot go beyond Goyau, and he throws considerable doubt on the optimists who claim 10,000,000.

I find no later attempt at a serious estimate, and

conclude that, in spite of the accession of more than 1,000,000 Catholics with Alsace-Lorraine, the faithful in France number not more than 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 in a population of 42,000,000. The Church has gained nothing numerically by its policy. Let me warn the reader against the trick of distinguishing between "practising" and other Catholics. Every Catholic knows that if he misses mass on a Sunday morning or eats meat on a Friday he, for each such offence, incurs eternal damnation as surely as if he committed murder or rape. It is psychologically impossible that millions should really believe this, yet for years completely and frivolously ignore the obligations. It is just a trick to count seceders with the faithful.

The French writers, we saw, were until some ten years ago especially proud of the Catholic youth of France. They soon had such proof of the illusoriness of this zeal of the young men that the Church was shaken to its foundations. For the most part these new and active bodies of young men turned to Fascism or royalism for the political and economic salvation of France. They are the men and youths who fight Communists on the streets, howl down politicians, and call themselves the Camelots du Roi, the Action Française, Jeunesses Patriotes, and so on. There is no serious danger of a royalist reaction in France, but the equilibrium is so unstable in that land of political fissiparity and ambition that the Government strongly resented the growth of further opposition bodies which might become the nuclei of all sorts of reactionary sentiment. Their ally, the Pope, was requested to do his part.

The trouble began when, in 1926, the heir to the French throne, the idol of Catholic youth, the Duc d'Orléans, lay dying at Palermo. In accordance with the tradition

of the royal house, his sister, the ex-Queen of Portugal, asked that the Pope should send him a special blessing, and the Vatican peremptorily refused. The Catholic royalists stirred, and a few months later the Cardinal-Archbishop of Bordeaux condemned the chief body of them, L'Action Française. The ground alleged was that some of their leaders were tainted with heresy. It was the kind of heresy which the Church can afford to overlook when it cares, but in the negotiations that followed the prelate hinted that the interests of the Church had to be consulted; in other words, plainly, it had to oblige the French Government. The members of the association were intransigent, and wholesale sentence of excommunication was passed upon them. Even if they were dying, the sacraments of the Church and Catholic burial must be refused by the priests.

The result was a literature of revolt such as the Church rarely experiences in any of its branches. The Church was fierily told that it must mind its own business, and the Vatican and the archbishops were assailed quite opprobriously. Paul Courcoural's works, especially *La fin de la querelle* (1929), are typical of the group. On the strength of "edicts that have issued from the Vatican" the French clergy are excluding their children from the schools and their dead from the cemeteries. This is done to please "a Government of Freemasons," with which no Pope ought ever to have had any truck. The writer, an influential Catholic journalist, well informed in theology, asks, in regard to the Pope's reconciliation with the Government:

Will anybody tell us how that prevented it [the Government] from retaining and extending its blasphemous laicism, its negation of God? And does the Vatican, on the other hand, in coming to the support

of the Republic, in taking action against L'Action Française, lend its help to the laicism which we alone threaten? (p. 120).

He insists that the faith is in ruins in France on account of the policy of the Government, which the Papacy supports, and he exclaims that "there is no nationalism in the world comparable with that of the Roman Curia" (p. 126). Pierre Lalo, another writer of the group, is quoted saying that "there is something rotten in the French Church—in the Church, in fact," and complaining that the Pope has also betrayed his office by his favourable attitude toward Italian Fascism. Courcoul concludes :

It is one of the worst scandals that the history of the Church has ever recorded. It has known many and various sorts, but this attack upon Truth and Light on the part of those who ought to watch over them, this adulteration of the spirit on the part of the guardians of the sacred torch—what worse can be imagined? (p. 258).

This domestic quarrel interests us because it shows the Papacy even straining the facts to condemn a large body of its own faithful in order to oblige a Government which it had for decades described, like that of Italy, as "enemies of God."

### § 3. *Contortions of Papal Diplomacy*

A diverting hour was spent at the Freethought Congress at Paris in 1924 when French, German, Belgian, and other deputies accused each other of traffic with the natural enemy, the Papacy. France was just then hoping to resume its anti-clerical policy, and the Belgian Socialists were heatedly accused of having entered into a formal alliance with the Church against the Liberals. Victor Denis, the Belgian Socialist leader, told me afterwards

that this was true. "We will ally ourselves with the devil if we can get what we want," he said, laughing; and he expressed his utter contempt of a Church that solemnly denounced Socialism in half a dozen countries yet co-operated with him and his colleagues in Belgium. I warned Denis about the need of a long spoon when one sups with the devil, and he again laughed. To-day, we shall see, the Belgian Church is, under the direction of the Vatican, fostering a Fascist movement which promises to annihilate Socialism as it has done in Italy and Germany.

We shall find similar contortions in the relations of the Vatican with Soviet Russia; but one point in the peculiar story of those relations is of interest here. The Vatican, we shall see, made overtures to Russia in 1922, when all the Churches in the world had reached their shrillest note of indignation at what was understood to be an appalling slaughter of ecclesiastics during the previous three years. We shall see how this was followed by the Papacy taking part in the relief of victims of the famine, until the Jesuit directors of the mission abused their trust. But it was to France that the Pope turned next, exacting a service in return for his help.

Two devout French Catholic writers, far removed from the rebel group, Georges London and Charles Pichon, tell us, rather admiringly, in their work *Le Vatican et le Monde Moderne* (1933), the story of the Pope's various attempts to conciliate Soviet Russia, in order that he might save the remnants of his own Church and bring under his obedience what was left of the Orthodox Church. For his third and final attempt the Pope induced the French Government to use its diplomatic influence at Moscow to secure the admission of a Catholic bishop for the innocent purpose of visiting and consoling

the remaining Catholics of Russia. The authors admit that the Pope's agent was a French Jesuit, Father d'Herbigny, who was converted into a bishop for the purpose, and who so discharged his "innocent" mission that the Soviet authorities presently conducted him to the frontier. What the Pope has said about Russia since the failure of his third attempt to get a footing in it all the world knows, but we will have a section about Russia later.

There is no need to prolong the story of France and the Vatican, since the Vatican, while certainly rendering high service to France on the political side, did not obtain any influence in the country of the kind that interests us here. It succeeded only in administering a series of shocks to its own people. A. Loisy, the distinguished French scholar whose heresies the Church tolerated for years, but who at length disowned his clerical dignity and allegiance in disgust at the political unscrupulousness of the Vatican, gives us a remarkable instance in his last book, *L'Église et la France* (1925).

The French Church was, as I said, making very vigorous efforts to retrieve its losses in virtue of the new sympathetic attitude of the Government, but it was not, and never had been, blindly subservient to the Vatican. In order to alter this the Pope in 1923 took an extraordinary step. The seminary of St. Sulpice at Paris is regarded by all French Catholics as the central and historic shrine of their culture, and for forty years a manual of biblical study issued by this college and endorsed by the archbishops had been used in the provincial seminaries. On December 12th, 1923, Rome, to the consternation of French Catholics and the indignation of the hierarchy, condemned this manual on the ground that it contained "very numerous errors."

In short, the contortions of Papal policy in France have

injured the Church itself and illustrated once more the absurdity of the common idea that in Rome there is a very able and enlightened international control. Pope Leo XIII, who was supposed to be so shrewd a diplomat, ruined the French Church by clinging to the deposed royal house, in spite of its foul record of persecution, and railing at the Republic for twenty years after it had been set up by the people. Just when royalism seemed to have some hope of revival, Pope Pius XI stepped in and condemned it; and all France knew that this was part of its bargain with what is called at Rome "the government of Freemasons, Jews, and Atheists." And every Frenchman knows that if, as is not probable, Fascism made such progress in France that the army and the industrialists would support it, as they supported Mussolini in Italy, the immutable Papacy would swing back and discover that the Fascist-Royalist was the ideal form of government.



## CHAPTER VIII

### PIETY AND POVERTY IN POLAND

**I**T is a familiar jibe of the vivid and caustic French historian Michelet that Poland has never prospered since its French King in the sixteenth century had returned to his country "taking with him the crown diamonds and leaving behind the Jesuits." It is, at all events, an historical fact that the Poland which produced Copernicus and Sobieski degenerated after the sixteenth century as rapidly as did Spain, and the removal of the royal treasures may stand as a symbol of the squalid poverty into which it fell, the activity of the Jesuits a symbol of its continued loyalty to the Catholic faith. Even just after the Reformation it seemed as if the future lay with the Catholic civilizations: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Austria, Hungary, and France. But the change had already begun. The Catholic nations, except France, which for centuries has been only superficially Catholic, shrank and were impoverished, while Holland, England, Prussia, and the other Protestant countries gave birth to the modern world.

The partition of Poland in the eighteenth century between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and the oppression of the country by Tsarist Russia throughout the nineteenth century, sufficiently account for its lowliness until 1919. It is the modern Republic of Poland, which was then established, that interests us here. That republic was treated by the Allies with a prodigality that outraged

every high principle that was on the lips of the moralists of Versailles, especially President Wilson. Ten million people of alien race were subjected to the Poles. They were then permitted to defy the League and seize Vilna and the surrounding territory by force from the Lithuanians, and when their demand for Upper Silesia, which was predominantly German, was refused and a plebiscite was ordered, they were allowed to create a scandalous organization to intimidate the voters, and they got a most improper share of the richer parts of the province.

In spite of all this, Poland remains one of the poorest countries in Europe. What makes it of peculiar interest to us here, however, is the fact that, while (or because) it is far and away the most Catholic country in Europe, it has been guilty of the grossest religious persecution in Europe, and its Church has for seventeen years condoned and profited by the most prolonged programme of atrocities in Europe. While the Pope and Catholics everywhere were crying to the heavens about the persecution of religion in Russia, the Polish hierarchy, the most submissive to the Vatican, was perpetrating over a very extensive territory just those outrages which the Pope falsely attributed to the Russians, and was supporting a Fascist tyranny that used particularly brutal methods.

### § 1. *The Republic and the Dictator*

Let me at once show that Poland is so intensely Catholic that we may assume that its bishops are exceptionally sensitive to the wishes of the Vatican. If we consult statistics, 70 per cent. of the inhabitants of the Republic are Poles by race and 74 per cent. are Roman Catholics; and in this case the religious statistics seem to be much

nearer the truth than elsewhere. It is true that the Polish Church, which in the eighteenth century had 15,000,000 members yet had only about 7,000,000 at the end of the last century, must have suffered severely. The partition of the country and the heavy pressure of the Russian authorities throughout the last century had ruined the historic Church, and the fall of Tsardom was hailed in Rome with almost as much relief as in Warsaw. From the beginning of 1919, however, the heads of the Polish Church began to reverse the policy: to organize their own people and, by fair means or foul, to win back the millions of Greek or Orthodox Catholics.

A Catholic writer in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (February 1st, 1933), M. Robert de Traz, gives a sympathetic account of life in Warsaw, and a passage from this may be kept carefully in mind by the reader as he considers the extraordinary story that is told in the present chapter. The French writer has the greatest admiration for the Poles and their "spiritual romantic qualities," and he gives us this picture of their religious life in a mood of intense complacency:

In Poland religion is practised with extreme zeal. Not only does the passer-by salute the churches, crucifixes, and pious statues, but he even kneels in the street. I have seen them pray for a long time before a statue of the Virgin, one replacing another in the group. . . . When processions pass through the streets, all bow and make the sign of the cross and the responses; and long after the sacred procession has passed the incense floats, in blue clouds, mingled with the petrol of the taxis. At all hours attentive and devout crowds fill the churches. . . . The priests give the Communion to innumerable faithful, and many of them, their eyes closed, their faces transfigured with ecstasy, are lost in themselves when they have received the host. They have to be pushed or dragged to make way for others (p. 530).

In what are called the Catholic cities of Paris, Rome, and Madrid you will see hardly more of this than you do in London; but I have not seen any approach to this public and general practice of religion even in Belgrade, Sofia, Adrianople, and Athens.

This deep religious feeling is, further, very closely allied with an intense patriotic feeling. "The priests have been the passionate servants of the nation," M. de Traz says, "and the national faith learned of the religious faith to be in its turn mystic" (p. 531). The schools and universities are so steeped in "the Catholic atmosphere" that even the young men make a parade of religion. We are told that whereas in 1930 only 3000 of the students of Warsaw University were communicants, the number rose to 6000 in 1931 and to 10,000 in 1932.

We must allow for a little lyrical extravagance in the traveller's description—not many months after he had said that all Poles regarded Soviet Russia as an outcast barbarism the Government concluded a pact with Moscow—but we have here a picture of a nation which takes its religion more seriously than any other in Europe. Ireland alone comes into comparison, for, though Dublin scarcely corresponds to this picture of Warsaw, there is the same intimate association of piety and patriotism. There is, too, some analogy in economic inefficiency, though even Ireland is less poor than Poland. "Nearly all the Poles are ruined," M. de Traz remarks, in a cheerful parenthesis. He describes the terrible impoverishment of the middle class, and says that the unemployed get about threepence a day; though a work published by the Poles in America denies that they get this. There are villages, says M. de Traz, of 100 to 150 inhabitants where all the coin in circulation amounts to "only a few zlotys" (a zloty is about ninepence). There is, in fact, no picture of squalid

poverty in the whole of our literature to equal that of the life of certain Polish workers given by Spivak, an eye-witness, in his *Europe under the Terror*.

It is necessary to understand this priest-ridden condition of Poland if we would appreciate correctly the share of the Church in the persecution and the horrors which I am going to describe. The attempt to exonerate the Church by charging the whole brutality to the ruthless designs of the late Dictator, Marshal Pilsudski, is, apart from the evidence we shall see, refuted by the fact that Pilsudski was not Dictator until 1926, and had had comparatively little influence in 1919 and 1920, when the persecution raged fiercely. It was Paderewski, who detested the rough and arrogant soldier, whom the Poles sent to Versailles.

Indeed, Pilsudski, who was not a Pole, and had for many years been a Socialist of the Russian school, seems to have been an apostate from the Catholic faith. Quite late in his career we find bodies of Catholics, especially the pious university students, regarding him with religious distrust. He merely used for his military purposes the fanatical blend of religion and patriotism which he found in the Poles, especially in the Polish clergy and soldiers. It is impossible to disentangle the responsibility of patriotism—which in the case of Poland means chiefly hatred and dread of Russia, a sentiment which the priests assiduously fostered—from the responsibility of religion in the years of brutality, but there is no need to attempt it. The aim of Church and State was the same—to crush aliens into subjection—and we shall find Church dignitaries prominent in the work even when it seems to be purely political.

### § 2. *The Church Persecutes Religion*

When Paderewski appeared at Versailles with the monstrous claim that millions of Germans and Ukrainians

should be brought under the yoke of the new Republic, Mr. Lloyd George warmly attacked the proposal, but the French and their allies overruled him. Certainly he could not foresee that a nation which had suffered persecution and tyranny for a century and a half would immediately turn to persecution and tyranny, and the French, who wanted a strong ally in Poland—which will almost certainly desert them in case of war—and a stout bulwark against Bolshevik aggression, did at least exact guarantees of the humane and tolerant treatment of minorities. The inhabitants of the Ukraine had already declared themselves a republic and had sent delegates to Paris to get this confirmed. The French would not listen to them, and the great province was incorporated in the Polish Republic; which, however, was compelled to promise it autonomy and perfect freedom for its native tongue and religious and other institutions.

Catholic influence has been particularly successful in excluding from our Press and literature news of the terrible conduct of the Catholics of Poland, because most English people think of the white Russians and Ukrainians, if they think of them at all, as a comparatively small and entirely negligible body of peasants. On the contrary, the territory inhabited by non-Poles which Paderewski had claimed was larger than Poland itself and contained more than 10,000,000 people; and in the Ukrainian cities the culture was at least equal to that of the Polish cities. The *Manchester Guardian* (October 11th, 1930), exposing a later stage of the persecution, described the Ukrainian civilization as "a very high one," and from the first the victims included large numbers of lawyers, professors, and priests (of the Greek Catholic Church).

Before the end of 1919, M. Clemenceau, who had been the chief draughtsman of the new map of Europe at

Versailles—though fire-eaters like Foch and Poincaré had dictated the policy—was disturbed by receiving a very painful document. Two of the most distinguished Ukrainians, V. Tennytski and J. Bouratch, published in French a memoir addressed to him (*Les atrocités polonaises en Galicie Ukrainienne*, 1919), in which they showed that the Poles were already vilely treating the Ukrainians of Galicia. They had resisted incorporation in Poland, and this had been made the ground of a ruthless attack upon their religion and race. “Whole villages were depopulated by massacre” and “hundreds were arrested every day in all the territory occupied by the Poles.” In one jail at Lemberg, which was reserved for the worst criminals, there were already 2000 Ukrainians, including 200 priests of the Orthodox Church. They were so crowded that at night there was not floor-space for them all to lie down. Pregnant women and women with suckling babies were among them, and, the writers say, the persecution was particularly directed against the intellectuals. The prisoners included many professors and lawyers and a Greek Catholic Vicar-General in his seventy-fourth year. The cells were very dark and damp, the food was insufficient, and all medical aid was refused, so that the packed prisoners suffered very severely and several died every day. Outside the jails the brutality was even worse. The distinguished authors give seven pages of detailed atrocities—murder, rape, beating, etc.—such as had not been seen in Europe since “the Bulgarian Atrocities” of almost sixty years ago. I remember that these outrages committed by the Turks in the Balkans were so loudly denounced all over Europe that I and other boys of twelve in the suburbs of Manchester were familiar with them. But I do not find that any paper in England told of these Polish atrocities of the year 1919.

We will consider this aspect of the subject in the next section. For the moment let us get clear about the religious element of the persecution, for the Polish Roman Catholic Church was as eager to destroy the Greek Orthodox Church as the Polish Government was to extinguish every trace of Ukrainian nationality. In Eastern Galicia, which was scandalously allotted at Versailles to Poland, more than 6,000,000 out of the 9,000,000 inhabitants are Ukrainians, or a western wing of the Slavs who fill the rich Russian Ukraine. In this province at the time of the Versailles Conference there were—if we disregard the fraudulent census which the Poles later published—about 1,000,000 Catholic Poles, 1,250,000 Jews, 4,000,000 Greek Uniates, and more than 3,000,000 members of the Greek Orthodox Church, or the Eastern Catholic Church which had in the early Middle Ages Christianized Russia from Constantinople. Doctrinal differences between Greek and Latin Catholics are very slight; but the ritual in the former case is in Greek and—this is the historic fount of hatred between the two Churches—the Greeks reject the authority of the Pope. The Greek Uniates are a hybrid body who are subject to Rome, but are permitted to keep their Greek ritual.

The Polish hierarchy at once opened a deadly attack upon the 3,000,000 members of the Greek Orthodox Church in Galicia. Conversion by argument is in that part of the world regarded as a quaint British or American pastime. Within six months of the solemn pledge given by Paderewski at Versailles that the religious and other institutions of the Ukrainians would be respected, those of them who belonged to the Orthodox Church passed under a reign of terror. The memorial I have quoted says :

The number of Ukrainian priests arrested to date is over 1000, and most of the Greek Catholic churches are



plundered by Polish soldiers and used as stables for the horses, even as latrines (p. 25).

Soldiers wore the sacred vestments derisively in the streets, and insulted any dignitaries of the Greek Church whom they encountered. The bishop's palace was patrolled, and he was not allowed to receive visitors or to go out. In Poland itself this shameful procedure was excused in the familiar way: it was just retaliation for Ukrainian atrocities. The Polish Archbishop Bilczewski gave currency in a letter which he published to a false story of a Ukrainian cutting out the tongue of a Polish priest.

Meantime the Allied Commissioners were arranging for the holding of a plebiscite in Upper Silesia. As the inhabitants were known to be German to the extent of seven to four, Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson would not in this case yield to the impudent Polish demand for the rich province, and an impartial vote, protected by French and Italian troops, was to be taken. The result was published in this country—707,000 votes for Germany and 480,000 for Poland—and the division of the province was considered just; though how the Polish minority got five-sixths of the mines of the rich industrial region, including three large towns which had voted by a big majority for Germany, was not explained. It is, however, far worse that no paper took up the very serious charge made by responsible officials that, in the words of the Italian commander, the Poles had won what they got by "violence and brigandage," and a dignitary of the Polish Church was one of the chief brigands.

René Martel gives the details in his work *La France et la Pologne* (1931), one of the books which the French began to publish when they realized the perfidy and selfishness of the Republic they had treated so generously. As soon as a plebiscite was ordered, the Poles set up an organiza-

tion to terrorize the Silesian voters. The details of the fighting and outrages do not concern us here, but the author tells us that one of the three official Polish directors of this organization was Mgr. Adamski, Roman Catholic Bishop of Posen. As in the case of Galicia, the Church was as unscrupulously eager as the State. Persecution of the German Protestants began as soon as the plebiscite was over, and sixty pastors were arrested and others expelled. By the year 1931, Martel says, hundreds of Protestant parishes were in ruins.

This persecution, religious and racial, has continued ever since. On March 18th, 1923, an immense crowd of Ukrainians, of all classes, gathered before their chief shrine, the cathedral of Leopold, to express peacefully their resentment of all tyranny, either Russian or Polish, and the Polish troops fell upon them with rifle and sabre. But the persecution was not confined to Galicia. In the whole of the new Republic Protestants and Greek Orthodox Catholics have been subjected to a pressure which in most cases merits the name of persecution and in many cases was as truculent as in Galicia. The pleas of the Ukrainian deputies in the Sejm, as long as Pilsudski suffered the Polish people to have that Parliament, were deemed to be rebellious, and the Greek Orthodox Catholics even in Warsaw were robbed of their churches and oppressed. This foul injustice, doubly reprehensible in a people that had been delivered from centuries of tyranny by the Allies—the French had even to save Pilsudski and his troops from the Russians, against whom they wantonly continued the war in 1920—was just as much due to the teaching and spirit of the Catholic Church as it was to the zeal of politicians to make the subject provinces entirely Polish.

§ 3. *And Consecrates Crime*

I shall presently quote other unimpeachable witnesses to this terror that was exercised during fifteen years by the Polish Church and Government, and the reader, especially if he has read the assurances of the heads of the Orthodox Church and the leading rabbis in Russia that there never was any persecution of religion as such there, will have some idea on how large a scale the modern world can be deceived. In America, for the first time in history, Catholic bishops publicly associated with Protestant bishops and Jewish rabbis in rousing popular indignation over the persecution of religion in Russia, and the Pope is still showering anathemas over the world and calling for a campaign. I have just received photographs of a meeting of 100,000 Canadian Catholics chanting the usual imprecations upon Russia. But although there is in America a large body of Ukrainian refugees in addition to a much larger body of immigrants, and they published the facts every year, only a few of the ordinary American papers told their readers that it was the Roman Catholics of Poland who had done what was charged against the Russians. There was some excuse at first in this country, but even when in 1930 the *Manchester Guardian* began to give incontestable proof of the horrors, only the *New Statesman* in addition dared to tell the truth.

It is even more painful to reflect that the severity with which a number of the Catholic clergy *were* treated in Russia was brought upon them by Polish Catholic conspiracies. Not only did the Poles sustain the war upon Soviet Russia long after the Allies had abandoned it, but for years afterwards the Roman clergy in Russia, most of whom were Poles, were agents of the Polish plotters. We shall see this later. Here let us conclude the subject of

persecution in Poland itself. I leave open here all questions of the value of political or economic forms, and we are all prepared to admit that it is as natural for the Catholic clergy to strive to bring others into their fold as it is for political partisans to seek to make converts. But I assume that any reader of this book resents the support of propaganda, especially of religious propaganda, by mendacity, violence, and cruelty. It is from this point of view that we consider the Polish Church's share in the joint racial and religious attack upon the Ukrainians of Galicia.

From the first, we saw, the campaign was marked by the grossest injustice and brutality. I need not follow it year by year, and will add only a few words about the intensification of it in 1930 and 1931, when the religious hatred was again conspicuous. During the first phase, which I have described, Pilsudski had no influence on events. He was the idol of the army, but not of Warsaw. It was 1926 before the corruption and ineptness of the politicians gave him his first step to power; for the Poles may be the most religious people in Europe, but they are certainly one of the most slovenly and corrupt. Pilsudski, saved from a threat of prosecution by the workers, who were largely Socialists, set up a military semi-dictatorship, and in September, 1930, he closed the Sejm and entered upon a full dictatorship. The Socialist and nearly all other leaders of the opposition to him were imprisoned in the fortress of Brest-Litovsk and were inhumanly treated. For three days the soldiers would give them no food except two pieces of dry bread each, and then they served up a stew of decaying meat and vegetables upon which they had thrown dirt and even excrements. The cold became intense, but each prisoner had only one dirty and ragged blanket to put on his verminous bed, and he might any night be taken from his cell and savagely flogged.

I give these details because Pilsudski now had the enthusiastic support of the Church, and from the beginning of his dictatorship there was a fiercer campaign against the Orthodox Greeks. The *Manchester Guardian*, the most conscientious paper in this country, made a severe inquiry, and in article after article exposed the atrocities that were being committed.<sup>1</sup> But there is a collection of documents published by the Ukrainians of America, *Atrocities in the Ukraine* (1931), edited by Emil Revyuk, which leaves no room for cavil. Foreign correspondents were harshly treated, when they would not yield to the hospitality of Warsaw. One American correspondent was beaten by the soldiers and another arrested, but, besides the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent, John Elliott of the New York *Herald-Tribune* and a few other American and Canadian correspondents got through and told the truth. Revyuk includes also in his book a report drawn up by the chaplain of the Catholic Uniate bishop, who says that (in October, 1930) the misery of the Ukrainians "surpasses the sufferings of Calvary"; and the bishop endorses what his chaplain reports, including a long list of Greek priests who were bayoneted, struck with rifle-butts or knouts, scalded with boiling milk, and in some cases driven mad by their torments. We have the confirmation of the report by the correspondents of the Chicago *Daily News* and the Toronto *Evening Telegram* and, especially, a long and shuddering report by Miss Sheepshanks, Secretary of the Women's International League. We have scores of private letters of Ukrainians to relatives in America, not intended for publication, which are almost written in blood.

<sup>1</sup> See, especially, October 11th, November 17th and 22nd, and December 29th, 1930, and January 28th and 30th, 1931. The atrocities at Brest-Litovsk were exposed by the Polish writer and senator, A. Strug, and were stormily debated in the Senate.

The proceedings were much the same everywhere. In the milder outrages the youths from the Catholic colleges were sent to fire ricks, destroy property, and insult Greek Catholic girls on the street. In the worst cases 1000 soldiers and police, often with artillery, were sent to destroy whole villages and brutally use, imprison, or kill the peasants. Miss Sheepshanks says that at least 500, possibly 800, villages were thus treated. The terror spread over 50,000 square kilometres. Churches, schools, monasteries, warehouses (belonging to Orthodox Greeks), and even cemeteries were bombed. Nearly 3000 schools were closed or appropriated by Roman Catholics. Co-operative societies were ruined by the hundred. Thousands were flogged or beaten to a pulp, and medical aid was generally refused. Priests were murdered and young women raped by the soldiers. All food was appropriated—the Uniate bishop tells us that in a month of travel he dined only once, as the peasants had no food—and thousands of acres of land were taken from the owners and given to Roman Catholic peasants from Poland. In the article which Revyuk (p. 9) quotes from the *Herald-Tribune*, one of the fairest papers in America and far from radicalism, we read :

In the Ukrainian villages of the district priests and peasants have been brutally flogged with the knout (a lash consisting of a tapering bundle of leather thongs, twisted with wire and hardened so as to mangle the body) and women shamefully mishandled.

Mr. Elliott said in this dispatch that there were 200,000 Ukrainians in jail. The officials of the Polish Embassy at Washington replied that this was just a misprint for 2000, and mendaciously added that they had seen this figure in the manuscript. The correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* showed that in these jails the torture, even of boys, was revolting. Priests, women, and boys

were ferociously flogged in the villages until they cried "Long Live Pilsudski." Women were driven insane by the brutality of the Catholic soldiers.

Let us return for a moment to the French Catholic writer who assures us that no people in Europe is so profoundly Catholic and docile to the clergy as the Poles are, and that in no other country is the political life so intimately connected with religion. That fact would be enough of itself to impeach a Church and its Roman pontiff which at least in silence supported such a regime of brutality. But the Church was not silent. Its prelates inflamed the Poles, sometimes with false stories, against the Ukrainians, and its priests followed everywhere in the wake of the torturers.

In the ravaged regions they at once converted Orthodox into Roman Catholic churches and took over the schools. Every soldier was a Roman Catholic, yet nowhere do we read of priests restraining or rebuking them. We are told, instead, that the chief object of having the Greek priest arraigned before his village and flogged, beaten about the head with rifle-butts, or put to disgraceful tasks, was to destroy the prestige of the Greek clergy. The plea of the Poles in the various countries in which they were seriously challenged, as they were not in England on account of the Catholic censorship, was that the Ukrainians were in revolt against their lawful Government. Certainly large numbers of them were. But especially in the case of lawyers, doctors, teachers, and urban priests, this was not the kind of revolt that any civilized authority would punish with such brutality, and, in any case, we see throughout the Polish Church encouraging and profiting by the Reign of Terror. Once more the Pope and his Church allied themselves, with the savagery that is poisoning the life of the world.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE VATICAN AND JAPAN

EUROPE is to-day being split into two bitterly hostile halves, just as it was in the sixteenth century. It is usual to conceive the two aggregations of peoples as Fascist on the one side and Democratic on the other, and this implies a political controversy with which I have here no concern. What we are considering is that in Italy, Austria, Poland, Germany, and Spain (to anticipate a little) the Papacy is either in close alliance with Fascist powers that rule nearly 200,000,000 people or, in the case of Germany, makes a pressing offer of such alliance.

This would of itself be interesting when we reflect on the terms in which Catholic apologists put before England and America the moral-political principles of their Church. In America, we shall see, their claims have a certain amusing impudence. Our modern liberties, our spirit of tolerance, our craving for self-government are represented by them as rooted in the teaching of the mediæval Schoolman and as vigorously asserted by all recent Popes since the death of Pius IX. In England the Catholic apologist cannot be quite so blatant, but he does insist that the Papacy never meddles with politics, yet has a natural sympathy with the free, fully-educated, self-governing type of modern state. The poor apologist has now to explain away the cordial alliance of the Papacy and of the national branches of the Catholic Church everywhere



with state-authorities which deride these ideals and rule as despotically as mediæval monarchs did.

Far more serious is it, however, that the authorities with which the Papacy most eagerly allies itself or seeks an alliance are just those which have resuscitated some of the vilest practices of the Middle Ages : imprisonment and often execution without trial, torture of prisoners, outrages upon unarmed civilians, unjust seizure or destruction of property, the glorification of war, and even the raping of women and the brutal treatment of children. The spectacle that half of Europe has presented during the last few years will dispose the historian of the future to look for parallels to our generation in what the Catholic calls the Age of Chivalry : an age which every historian who is an authority on it, for either England, France, Germany, or Italy, frankly describes as one of the most morally repulsive in history. And when the historian of the future perceives how this resurrected barbarism boasts of the purity and high superiority of its blood or its culture and, by the mouths of its ignorant Leaders, proclaims the rest of the world decadent and materialistic, he will probably hand over the problem to the social psychologist. What he will say of a Papacy which calls itself the most uncompromising moral authority on earth, yet allies itself with these glorified *condottieri*, may be left to the imagination.

But we have not yet exhausted the list of the Pope's picturesque allies. In one sense it seems to be true that the Vatican is a watch-tower from which a keen eye sweeps to the world's horizon. We have seen how the Pope offers his co-operation, which means his despotic influence upon the various national branches of his Church, in the prosecution of an aggressive war upon Bolshevism in Russia, Spain, and Mexico ; at least, I

cannot imagine even a Catholic apologist suggesting how Bolshevism is to be "destroyed" without aggressive war by the United States upon Mexico and by Germany and Japan upon Russia. Here already we have the Papal searchlight sweeping over the globe, and in two short chapters we will consider the relations of the Roman Church with Fascist and aggressive Japan and with whatever Fascist forces it can discover in Latin America. That will complete its series of alliances with what most of us regard as the gunmen or Public Enemies of international civilization.

### § 1. *Red or Yellow China?*

During the War, when the European Powers were fully occupied and America was busy capturing trade until it also joined in the War, Japan hurriedly equipped itself with industries and compelled China to make certain concessions which promised a market for its industries. It graciously permitted its tame giant to declare war on the side of the Western Allies; but when the representatives of China at Versailles claimed the reward—the reversion to her of such of her territory as Germany had held—the bland representatives of Nippon produced a secret treaty. As a reward for her permitting China to declare war and for not joining Germany herself, the Allies had promised her the German-Chinese territory and all the Pacific Islands north of the Equator. The Allies consented. No one recalled the Arab story of the man who, on a cold night, brought his camel into his tent and presently found himself shivering under the stars.

How misfortune of one kind or other for many years prevented Japan from pursuing its designs further need not be told here. Meantime, however, China had entered upon its bewildering modern development. While we

were sapiently repeating that East is East and West is West, Sun Yat Sen had taken advanced European ideas to China, and they were welcomed as a parched garden welcomes rain. I must simplify what follows; but the Pope's action in the Far East cannot be understood unless it is recalled in outline. Dr. Sun Yat Sen appealed to Europe and America for aid to develop China on temperate democratic lines, and it was refused. Russia then eagerly accepted the invitation, and, with its aid, the Chinese organized their Kuomintang (National Party) and began to create a modern army under the general whose name still figures repeatedly in our press, Chiang Kai-Chek.

But the Nationalist movement split, with the usual fatal consequences, into Right and Left wings. The Russian Communists captured the Left Wing and made it Communist, and Chiang Kai-Chek abandoned even his democratic views and became the autocratic ruler of the Right and of the greater part of the army. When he further announced himself a convert to Christianity and a ruthless enemy of all "Reds," Europe and America took the handsome adventurer to their bosoms and shed a golden rain upon the part of China that he governed. It was understood that he would make his army so numerous and powerful that he could sweep the Communists into the wilds of Central Asia and make China a peaceful and well-ordered market for the cotton-goods of Lancashire or Massachusetts. The Communists had obtained control of a region as large as England. With his new German-trained and German-officered armies, Chiang Kai-Chek drove them into a small area of western China. They were now "bandits," the scum of China, enemies of religion and civilization; while in every country the missionary societies joined with the merchants

in rejoicing that China at last showed a prospect of stability under a strong religious ruler.

It was largely because Europe and America were deceived by this misrepresentation of the situation that the Japanese were able to profit by it. Men who really understand the *imbroglio* of Chinese affairs have repeatedly protested against the slander of the Chinese Communists. So conservative a paper as the *Times* (November 13th, 1934) had an expert article on "Communism in China," and the writer observed that those who spoke of the Communists as bandits were "widely astray": that their area—at one time comprising 1,348,180 square kilometres—was orderly and rigorously controlled. The American *New Republic* (September 27th, 1934) published an article which explained that:

the Soviet regions were immeasurably more prosperous than adjoining regions ruled by respectable war-lords. The harvests were bigger, the taxes lower . . . a stable government, a state bank of issue, an arms factory, and a school system that has made immense progress towards its goal of providing universal free education.

In his presidential report on January 22nd, 1934, Mao Tse-Tsung stated that while 80 per cent. of the Chinese in the territory ruled by Chiang Kai-Chek and the Kuo-mintang were still illiterate, there were in the reduced area ruled by the Soviets 3052 elementary schools with 89,710 pupils, 6462 evening schools with 94,547 pupils, and 32,388 reading groups with 155,371 members. In some places 70 per cent. of the adult pupils of the evening schools were women, and it was a special aim of the Soviet regime to emancipate the women of China.

The real crimes of the Chinese Communists were, of course, the seizure of property and the attack upon religion. The former does not concern us here, and

ought not to concern the Pope, though he finds it the most valuable link in his new alliance. The central fact is, however, that the Chinese Communists made an even more drastic "war upon religion" than did those of Russia. Buddhist temples and Christian churches alike were destroyed, and a No-God movement, as it is usually called—why not say in familiar English "atheistic"?—swept China far beyond the range of Soviet rule. Missionaries even in Annam complained that virtually the whole educated population, masters and pupils alike, had taken up the new atheism. Such a movement easily spreads in China. The mass of the people genuinely cling only to one article of religion, the belief in devils, which are to them not so much part of a supernatural creed as an alien and hostile population living amongst them. To gods they attach much less importance; and, as cultivated Chinese have been in the overwhelming majority Atheists for the last 2000 years, the students enthusiastically supported the new movement.

Against this new Chinese dragon, which threatened to swallow the whole of the Pope's missions in China, Chiang Kai-Chek, convert to Christianity, posed as the modern St. George. In every region from which he drove the Communists the missionaries had their churches rebuilt and their well-known privileges restored. I do not care to discuss the depth of the Christian belief of that successful adventurer and several of his relatives, but the idealization of him in religious papers is nauseating. He is just a Chinese war-lord. China is the only civilization which, until its ancient culture and traditions collapsed, put military men on a lower level than scholars, but in the days of her confusion they have had their revenge.

Chiang Kai-Chek's soldiers are as licentious as those of any other war-lord, his exploitation of the merchant class

by taxes is severer, his tyranny is typically Fascist. The bulk of the Chinese in his own sphere of government regard him as a cruel and self-seeking adventurer who has defrauded China of the reforms projected by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, of whom he professes to be the successor. "To-day," says Philip Jordan, "he is a reactionary with political ideas abhorrent to those of us who cherish liberty." He started a "ruthless suppression of former comrades who disagreed with his new views," and sold large numbers of concessions to foreigners; and he evades or resists the Japanese encroachment upon his country only in so far as he must retain the European and American support the withdrawal of which would "leave him unprotected between the Japanese devil and the Communist deep sea." <sup>1</sup>

## § 2. *Japan Bribes the Vatican*

Thus to the impressive gallery of the Pope's virtuous allies—Franco, Mussolini, Hitler, Goering, Pilsudski, etc.—we add the figure of the Chinese Marshal, and we must now go on to add the group of fanatical militarists and rich merchants of Japan who aim to secure for themselves the exclusive right to exploit eastern Asia and all the islands of the Pacific. As I have previously observed, Japan in the days of its humane sobriety and artistic dignity had little interest for the Vatican. The Pope began a sedulous cultivation of it only when it committed the outrage in Manchuria which the League of Nations found courage to condemn and which still lies under the ban of most civilized nations; and this edifying

<sup>1</sup> *News-Chronicle*, December 16th, 1936. Mr. Jordan also rebukes the practice of calling the Chinese Communists "bandits."

friendship of a White Pope and a Yellow Emperor, this moving harmony of the chief interpreter of the ethic of the New Testament and an intensely aggressive militarism, has reached its full fruition, in the mutual exchange of ambassadors, just when the rest of the world had come to regard Japan as one of the three most criminal and most infected areas on earth.

The curt announcement in the *Times* in the summer of 1936 that the Japanese had, after long negotiations, agreed to send an ambassador to the Vatican City and the Pope to send a Nuncio to Tokio, dispenses me from giving laborious proof of an alliance which, otherwise, half my readers would regard as imaginary. They will be still more surprised to learn that the courtship which preceded the formal nuptials has lasted at least since 1931. It, in other words, began in visible form as soon as Japan had committed that outrage upon helpless China, the annexation of Manchukuo, which has done so much to promote the demoralization of our generation. If the reader feels incredulous, since no pointed indication of such an alliance has ever reached him, let him remember that one of the chief purposes of this book is to convince him that a very real censorship of news, chiefly by Catholic organizations which represent less than one-twentieth of the population, is exercised in this country.

The *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a French fortnightly literary review which was once esteemed the highest of its class in the world and is now under Catholic control, occasionally gives us, admiringly, information about Papal policy which Catholics do not care to obtrude in this country. On January 15th, 1935, it contained a long and boastful article on the subject; and, since the article was anonymous, which is almost unprecedented in that review, we justly suspect that the author was a priest or prelate

of some repute. Reaching Japan in the course of his survey of the world, he says :

Japan to-day respects Christianity in general, but Catholicism particularly. It is just as favourable as Russia is unfavourable. No Japanese prince or mission now passes through Rome without paying its homage to the Sovereign Pontiff. A short time after it had given birth to the new State of Manchukuo the Japanese Government advised its ward to turn to the Holy See with a request that it should be officially recognized : an event of some importance seeing that the Powers refused to recognize it and Japan had left the League of Nations. These Japanese-Manchukuoan overtures did not secure formal recognition, but, as the Catholic missions in Manchukuo supported them, the Vatican appointed a French Vicar Apostolic to negotiate with the Government of Manchukuo about religious affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Since I refrain in this book from attempting to penetrate disguises and to interpret obscure events, I leave to the reader the little mystery of the initiation of these "overtures." He may, if he pleases, believe that the very unidealistic Commanders of the Japanese army, the atheistic statesmen of Tokio, and the equally atheistic Manchurian officials were at once concerned about the spiritual welfare of their new "ward," and felt that the Pope must be implored to see to it. Or did France and Italy, which dare not flout civilization by condoning the rape of China, think that they could get the Pope, whose acts are above criticism, to head a procession of recognizers? I leave it open. It is enough that, though the Pope had too careful a regard for the anger of American Catholics openly to consecrate the aggression of Japan, he at once entered upon a period of such close co-operation that no Japanese prince or official from that time failed to pay his respects at the Vatican if he visited Rome.



The world-press, which had gushed over the reconciliation of Italy and the Vatican, was singularly silent about this much more picturesque alliance.

Nor were there any editorials when, last June, a yellow ambassador took his place amongst the Christian ambassadors at the shrine of Catholicism and a Christian dignitary stood amongst the profane ambassadors at the pagan court of the Mikado. For by that time the criminal designs of Japan were recognized throughout the world. From Manchukuo, which it hypocritically pretended to civilize and neglected when it found the land unprofitable and unattractive to Japanese settlers, it advanced through Jehol to the fertile plains and busy cities. It violated every pact it had signed since Versailles, and, when some of its leading statesmen protested and tried to save its ancient honour, they were brutally murdered. In no other country in the world is the contrast between the wealthy and the workers steeper. The men work—I again quote the Catholic *Revue des Deux Mondes*—from twelve to sixteen hours a day for from sixpence to two shillings a day, while a dozen families almost monopolize the profits of their industry, and these rich families now hope to find even cheaper labour in China. Their treatment of China, with the connivance of Chiang, is a corrupt and sordid piece of bullying, and they now aim at conquering all eastern Asia and all the Pacific Islands, including Australia and New Zealand. Whatever we may think about this monstrous dream, Japanese writers have told us in the London Press how every single officer in the Japanese army, whether he be of the fanatical school or not, is sworn to work for the expulsion of all whites from Asia.

Thirty years ago I, in a chapter of a small work (*Secular Education*), compiled a large number of tributes, half of

them from missionaries, to the excellence and humanity of the Japanese character. My friend Robert Young, editor of the *Kobe Times*, warned me that a change had begun, though the picture was substantially true. It is true of the Japanese people to-day, but an acrid poison has entered the veins of their ruling classes. And the reaction of the Papacy to the change is in harmony with its entire policy. Thirty years ago it was content to send priests to convert the Japanese to civilized ways. To-day, when Japan is controlled by aggressive soldiers and greedy merchant-princes, it enters into a formal and cordial alliance with these. A Red China would have been more than prejudicial to its interests in that country. Japan offers it, on the contrary, the most-favoured-nation clause for its missionary work. And Japan is now openly allied with Germany and must therefore be one of the instruments which the Pope expects and encourages to "destroy Bolshevism in Russia." Does anybody really think that the Vatican, which is something far more than a senile Pope, is not fully aware that such a plot would in all probability lead to the greatest and most savage war of all time?

## CHAPTER X

### THE TRUTH ABOUT MEXICO

**I**F I may use an American expression, this offering of the co-operation of the Roman Church in "destroying Bolshevism in Russia, Spain, and America" has been the official slogan of the universal Church since the summer of 1936. In Germany and the entire English-speaking world, especially, it roars from the throats of a thousand Peter the Hermits and stands out in large type in the columns of a hundred Catholic papers. It is, therefore, the present Roman Catholic attitude, not the impulsive utterance of an aged and ailing Pope who probably does not know the difference between a Communist, a Socialist, and a Syndicalist.

And we may credit the leaders of the Church in these various countries, seeing that they now have their economic and sociological staffs and counsellors, with some definite knowledge of what they mean. Bolshevism means Communism as distinct from Socialism (or Menchivikism). There is, as Stalin recently said, none in Russia to-day, and there is little in other countries. Profound harm has been done to the world by the Russians pressing it for some years after the Revolution, but they themselves now regard it as an ideal of the future.

The Catholic campaign against Bolsheviks or Reds is, therefore, a deliberately mis-titled effort to induce various countries to make war upon other countries which have adopted Socialism in one or other degree and to mask the real aim—the restoration of the power and wealth of the

Church—with a tissue of untruths about persecution of religion. In other words, the Roman Church presses Germany and Japan to make aggressive war upon Soviet Russia—the phrase is otherwise a piece of empty and meaningless rhetoric—with a full consciousness that this would probably initiate a new and more terrible European war, and it converts the Spanish horror, in which a group of military men and millionaires employ foreign troops to butcher their own people, into a holy crusade.

What does it mean in its application to Mexico? I am very familiar with the ingenuity of Catholic apologists, but I cannot imagine any other meaning except that the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is ready, or more than ready, to support the Government of that country in an aggressive war upon Mexico. To some readers this may seem incredible, but they must be unacquainted with America. For twenty years the annexation of Mexico has been discussed as freely as the making of the Panama Canal. "Why, of course, we *must* take it over sooner or later," said an American engineer to me in Merida, the capital of Yucatan; and a Mexican official, poring over the map with me in Mexico City, said, with a sigh: "That is what the Americans have left us of our country, and we wonder how long they will leave us that." It is no secret that what is in America curtly called "Wall Street" wants Mexico. The Pope now offers to bless the enterprise and convert it, like Hitler's plan to conquer Russia and Japan's plan to conquer China, like Italy's "conquest" of Abyssinia, into a highly respectable campaign to protect the interests of religion.

### § I. *What I Saw in Mexico*

The way is prepared by filling the world with horrid stories of the persecution of religion and the butchery of

priests in Mexico. Ten years ago I had sent to me a little booklet, in blood-red cover, which had been published by the American Knights of Columbus. It gave a list of priests who had been murdered by Mexican officials or soldiers in the early summer of 1926, and on the last page it appealed to the financiers of Wall Street to help Catholics to induce the Government at Washington to. . . . At that point such appeals always become vague, like the Pope's Delphic utterances on Abyssinia.

It happens that in just that period I travelled from end to end of Mexico, from El Paso to the south of Yucatan, and no such murders or executions took place. This was the period of the tense beginning of the conflict of Church and State, yet I saw no harshness anywhere, even in Catholic towns like Puebla and Oaxaca. The Government had begun to apply a law that had been passed long before to put an end to political intrigue: priests and nuns who were foreigners—that is to say, who were Spanish—must leave the country. A veteran of the days of Diaz told me how that famous President had more than once tried to apply the law to Spanish religious communities, but his pious wife had secretly warned them and defeated him. President Calles began to apply the old law strictly, and the story was spread abroad, as usual, that a handful of Atheists had secured power and were tearing religion out of the hearts of the devoted people. The truth was that, as one of the politicians confessed to me, the body of the workers themselves put pressure upon the Government to enforce the law.

It was at first enforced with restraint and courtesy. I saw police or soldiers escorting Spanish nuns to the coast, and their conduct was irreproachable. I mixed among all classes, sometimes spending hours in conversation with groups of Indians far away from towns, but I never heard,

even in the most Catholic parts, a charge of violence. A week later I was in Havana and read the chief daily, which is, of course, Catholic and Conservative. It chanced that it was just then publishing a series of articles on the Church and State trouble in Mexico, and I got the series. The writer was a Catholic Mexican journalist, and he was, he said, disgusted at the untruthful stories that were circulated. The only "outrage" that had occurred so far in Mexico City was that, when certain Spanish nuns were to be ejected, the wife of the Belgian ambassador and other Catholic ladies sent their maids to boo and harrass the police. Soon stones and bottles were thrown, and some of the police were severely injured; and the only retaliation, this Catholic journalist said, was that the police summoned a fire-engine and gave the rioters a mild bath by directing the hoses on the walls of the houses and letting the water splash back. For my part, I travelled over about 3000 miles of Mexico and walked the streets of Mexico City for two weeks, but I never saw or heard of an outrage or conflict. Compare with this the pictures we have seen of Italy, Spain, Austria, and Poland when, by alliance with dictators, the Church obtained power over its critics.

Calles's Government was solidly based upon the majority of the educated workers and was rapidly gaining the support of the entire country by its beneficent social work. A Catholic who is eager to know the truth might reflect, to begin with, on the significant fact that the mass of the people in every country are left illiterate as long as the Church retains power, whereas the first task to which an anti-clerical Government always addresses itself is education. Any who have not known this may be invited to study the figures of illiteracy in Italy when the Italian Government took it over, in Spain until Liberalism became

powerful in this century, or even, until 1931, in Portugal before the Revolution, and so on; and then compare with these figures the extraordinary zeal for education of the Soviet authorities, the anti-clericals of Spain and of Vienna (where there had been education but of the poorest type) in their years of power, and of the Mexican Government.

The Mexican population consists of some 12,000,000 Indians and about 4,000,000 people of mixed Spanish and Indian blood. The figures are given the other way about in some publications, but an official of the Education Department told me that this was rather to meet the wish of the workers. Very large numbers of the Indians are trained, and often skilled, workers, and proud of their Indian blood—one of the finest Presidents of the last century, Benito Juarez, was a pure-blooded Indian—but foreigners have a ridiculously false idea of the character of Indians. I found them uniformly courteous and intelligent: as alert mentally as the corresponding workers of any country. I have travelled at night for twenty miles with a bus-load of them through country without a house or a lamp, and felt safer than walking along Michigan Avenue at night. Much of what we read about Mexico is so gross that only a year or two ago a novel appeared in which the hero, leaving his boat at Progreso (Yucatan), is warned not to move inland on account of the terrible Indians (who here are pure-blooded Mayans). The fact is that Progreso is the port for Merida, the capital, a fine city of 50,000 people a score of miles inland, and from there I made excursions of 150 miles by rail and car amidst as pleasant and civilized a people as one would meet anywhere. To say the truth, I found that in "savage Yucatan" the Trade Unions were more powerful and secured more for the workers than in England.

It is this European ignorance about the people of Mexico that enables Catholic and some other writers to impose the legend that a small minority in Mexico City oppress the Church against the wish of the enormous majority of the people. My first experience of Mexican life was significant. I crossed the Rio Grande on a Sunday morning and reached the *plaza* of Ciudad Juarez, a rather primitive town a few miles over the frontier, just at the hour of High Mass; and, to my astonishment, most of the workers of the town were defiantly holding a political meeting opposite the door of the church. The congregation, when it issued, consisted almost entirely of women and girls; including a group of girls, demurely carrying their prayer-books, from what an American would call the Red Light district on the fringe of the town. Some towns are more Catholic than others, but the great body of the educated workers despise the Church and know its history. And their degree of education was being rapidly extended over the country. Ten years ago, when I visited the Education Department, they had 20,000 schools at work and had already reduced illiteracy (over the age of ten) to less than 50 per cent. This work, and the equally fine social work that was done in other directions—in no country in the world is there a more humane and successful treatment of crime—were winning the majority of the people. The Church, as in so many other countries, was crumbling away.

### § 2. *Ten Years of Sordid Untruth*

In the last ten years social reconstruction has proceeded steadily in Mexico, but the world abroad hears only that "Bolshevism" is established in the country and is bloodily and arbitrarily persecuting the Church. In point of fact, what Bolsheviks or Communists there are in



Mexico are heavy critics of the Government. The regime is, Charles S. Macfarland (an American and rather hostile Protestant) says in one of the most recent books (*Chaos in Mexico*) on the subject, "a vague Socialism": that is to say, a temperate semi-Socialism, which it is absurd to call "Red." But Mr. Macfarland, an official of the American Federation of Churches, says that the Mexicans *do* persecute the Catholic Church. He finds much in Mexico that improves upon America. In Mexico, he says, "there seems to be no need for a League of Decency" (p. 8). The work of education proceeds rapidly. The criminal law and administration are ideal. But religion is persecuted. Does he, then, endorse the stories of murders of priests? Not only does he never mention them, but the Catholic prelates whom he sympathetically interviewed did not claim that such things had taken place. The persecution is that the Government seizes Church property, allows Reds to mutilate it, permits caricatures of the priests in the popular Press, and officially sticks its profane posters on the walls of the churches. This is all that a hostile critic can find to justify the grim cry of the whole Catholic world that the United States shall conquer the Mexican people as the Italians and Germans are conquering the Spanish people.

The entire Church in Mexico and elsewhere supports that cry, and this is enough of itself to justify the Government in putting the severest pressure upon it. On June 16th, 1935, the Rotarians (mainly from the United States) had their Conference in Mexico City, and 15,000 of them marched through the streets with banners inscribed "We protest against religious persecution." Fancy 15,000 Rotarians or any others marching through Berlin or Rome or Warsaw crying "We protest against the persecution of Socialism." The Mexican Government tolerated the insult; but it watches what is left of the Church, and

will not let it accumulate wealth or property for the purpose of plotting.

Professor W. H. Calcott gives a temperate account of the deepening struggle in *Liberalism in Mexico* (1931). The Constitution of 1917 forbade the clergy to embark upon any kind of political activity. The English Catholic does not find that oppressive: he says that the Church never does meddle in politics. Most other people, even in England, know that the religious issue is as fundamental in politics in all Latin America as tariff reform used to be in England. Conservatism means the Church: Liberalism and the deeper shades of red are "enemies of the Church." And the Mexicans of ten years ago decided that, though their own revolutions had not been as much concerned with the Church as those of South America—"Every revolution in Mexico during the last twenty years has been organized in Wall Street," said an American journalist to me in Mexico City—they would close down that source of social trouble.

In 1923, Professor Calcott relates, the Government had to expel the Pope's Delegate for "direct intervention in Mexican affairs"; in 1924 the Government found that the Church had collected a large sum of money for a political purpose (helping to defeat the radicals at the election), and that religious orders which were by the law forbidden to teach had opened schools. So in 1925 these schools were closed and the Spanish priests and nuns were expelled. The archbishops and bishops, on instructions from Rome, then, in 1926, inflamed their followers against the Government and urged them to defy the law, while Catholic societies directed their members to drape their houses with black crape. Priests in very ignorant districts told the Indians that a plague of locusts that occurred was sent by God on account of this "persecution of religion."

That was the historical beginning of the modern phase of the conflict, as told by a competent and impartial authority. In 1929 the Government came to terms with the Papacy, but outrages continued in the country, where the clergy inflamed the illiterate Indians. A train was wrecked and 150 lives were lost. Ex-President Obregon was murdered. Several provincial governments, seeing priests desert their churches and take to the hills with ragged and half-barbarous troops, ordered that in future only one priest would be allowed to 50,000 people. That was their estimate of the number of genuine Catholics. The Pope, naturally, issued a thunderous Encyclical, and the Archbishop of Mexico and the Apostolic Delegate, the Pope's representative, were just as naturally expelled. In four large provinces all the churches were closed and many of the bishops and priests banished. It was war: an armed revolt of the Cristeros (Christians), often led by priests or bishops. Certainly many priests were now shot—like rebels anywhere.

Mr. F. V. Williams, who was Al Smith's publicity agent in his election campaign, had an article, with a horrid blood-red edging, in the American journal *Liberty* on August 24th, 1935, on the events which in Mexico were going to lead, he said, to a "Bloody Revolt." He made the flesh of good Americans creep and their minds turn again to the idea of "intervention": in other words, aggressive war and conquest. He had found the archbishop, disguised as a peasant, hiding in a cave. Behind all the "terrible persecution," the prelate told him, was "hatred of God, hatred of everything that is good and decent." You may remember that a few pages back I quoted a strict American Protestant observing that Mexico was just the country where no League of Decency was required. The Government, the archbishop (who is

described as a marvellous scholar) said, was Communist (it detests Communism), and in its schools "children are taught to despise their parents." Thousands of Mexicans had been martyred in five years, but 90 per cent. of the people were still Catholics. But unless someone intervened, the 10 per cent. would make all Mexico Communist. If that would not shake Washington, Mr. Williams's readers must have reflected, what would?

The archbishop did not say a word about the war in which his Cristeros were fighting. Soon afterwards an article, "The Holy War in Mexico," written by a Mexican Catholic, Moreno, appeared in the *Forum*. He, in deep disgust, said that the Mexican Catholics and their priest leaders were wholly responsible. A large band of them had stopped and attacked the train in which he was travelling in Mexico. They made no inquiry into the opinions of the passengers, but fell upon them with murderous savagery, hacking women and children. He says that the opening of the campaign against the Church in 1926 was "accepted by the people with extraordinary calm"—as I saw—because large bodies of the Indians had never been Catholics. It is well known in Mexico that in remote rural districts numbers of the Indians cling secretly to their old nature-religion, and are now delighted that they have no longer to share their scanty pittance with a priest. Some months before this the *New York World-Telegram* (June 8th, 1935) had printed an interview with an impartial business-man, Mr. J. Austin Smith, who had just returned after two years in Mexico. He was disdainful about the atrocity stories. "I saw no persecution except of law-violators," he said; and he added that he had "heard more about trouble with the Church in New York than in Mexico."

The reader will now see the meaning of the Pope's new

ardour for a campaign to crush Bolshevism in Mexico. He has lost the savage little war into which his priests had driven a large number of the ignorant peons. He has lost Mexico. The great majority of the people take calmly enough the seizure of all Church property and the narrow restriction of the number of priests. The statements of Catholic journalists like Williams, which have the sole aim of disposing Americans to support a conquest of Mexico, are absurd. Instead of one-tenth of the nation oppressing nine-tenths, the Government is based upon the free support of the majority of the educated men, who are more than half the nation. "The Mexican Government is in the saddle to stay," said the New York business-man I have quoted; just as Sir Bernard Pares quotes "a hostile foreign diplomat" saying to him in Moscow: "The Bolsheviks have won all along the line." So, as usual, the Vatican looks round for gunmen and uses the well-trained broadcasting agencies of the Church to fill the world with cries about enemies of God and decency and terrible persecution of religion.

### § 3. *The Church in South America*

Mrs. Rosita Forbes, the famous traveller, will hardly be regarded as a very dangerous person or an enemy of the Holy Church, yet after her lengthy visit to South America, she wrote :

It is possible that the organization and methods of Soviet Russia may be destined to provide the machinery necessary to liberate the South American Republics from the yoke of European feudalism and of North American finance.<sup>1</sup>

There has, in fact, been an intense propaganda in favour of Communism of the Russian type all over South America

<sup>1</sup> *Eight Republics in Search of a Future* (1933), p. 7.

during the last ten years. Whole cargoes of advanced literature and "Red" missionaries have landed at Montevideo, and an association of converts and sympathizers, the Apra (Asociacion Popular Revolucionaria Americana), spread over the southern continent. Its leader in Peru, a man of good family and culture, obtained 100,000 votes when he was candidate for the Presidency in what we had regarded as one of the most impenetrably Catholic of republics, and his party was the second in the State in strength. In Chile, which used to be just as priest-ridden, an Atheist-Socialist Government held power for a time in 1922. Missionaries complained that in Argentina and Brazil the urban workers had to such an extent abandoned the Church that a Catholic could hardly obtain admission to a Trade Union. By the summer of 1935 between 15,000,000 and 20,000,000 had left the Church of Rome in Latin America, and the anti-clerical movement, sometimes Socialist and sometimes Communist but always bitterly anti-Papal, was spreading as rapidly as education spread. As in Spain itself, men's eyes were for the first time being opened to the true history of the Church in their continent and to the cynical licentiousness of the greater part of the clergy they supported.

When one looks at this situation purely from the religious point of view, one is inclined to regard it as the inevitable result of the extension of education. Scepticism has for several decades been more common than piety amongst men of the middle and richer class in Latin America. In 1906 they held an international congress in Buenos Aires, and enthusiastic crowds filled the Teatro Argentino. The Presidents of Uruguay and Guatemala openly sent their congratulations, and Vice-Admiral Howard and other prominent Argentinian officials associated themselves with the congress. Several of the best

women writers of South America were members of the committee. The long struggle of the Whites and the Blacks, the anti-clerical Liberals and the clergy, seemed to draw nearer to a final victory of the Whites.

But the appearance in the arena of a new colour, the Reds, terribly complicated the issues. Conservatives and Liberals had been divided mainly, and bitterly, on the Church issue. Now they began to approach more closely to each other in the defence, against a common enemy, of something that was more sacred than the Church—property. Mrs. Forbes justly observes that the contrast between rich and poor is nowhere starker than in Latin America. We are constantly reminded of the elegant luxury of the wealthy men of Rio de Janeiro, but of the appalling sufferings of the nearly 30,000,000 peasants and workers in the background of their vast and rich country we rarely hear. Professor E. Braga and K. G. Grubb declare in their authoritative work, *The Republic of Brazil*, that the beautiful country is “an immense hospital.” Seventy per cent. of the population are below a decent level of vitality through disease. In the poorest districts the Church cares little about them, supplying only one priest to 50,000 or even 100,000 Indians. In the smaller towns the priests, monks, and nuns batten shamelessly on them and openly parade their loose morals. Less than ten years ago an American correspondent of mine who had spent more than twenty years in this weird world wrote me of an experience which in any other country would be deemed, for our age, quite incredible. A young priest had asked him to get, very privately, a good barometer for him from the United States. It was a droughty district, and prayers for rain were risky. The priest’s next plea to the heavens for rain was well-timed, and his grateful parishioners richly rewarded him. The sequel in

my friend's letter is revolting, but more harm than good is done by suppressing ugly facts. He says of the priest, whom he knew well :

He gloated over the affair, for he was a cynic; he said that his prestige had been raised by about a thousand per cent. I saw him subsequently at midnight in a brothel of a neighbouring town in his underclothing, embracing a prostitute in the garb of Eve in a hammock. He had recognized my voice while I was taking refreshment with some friends in an adjoining bar to the room he was in, and he called me to witness the beautiful object of his lust.

Educated workers will not tolerate these things, as the illiterate workers of the last three centuries have done, and they are particularly exasperated at the luxury of the bishops and other dignitaries of the Church who have tolerated them for centuries.

But on the heels of Communism everywhere came Fascism, and the Church now had a broader alliance than with the Conservatives alone. Large numbers of Liberals have, as they did recently in Spain, at least abandoned their hostility to the Church, though they usually resent the brutal methods of Fascism. Indeed, many middle-class Liberals have passed over to the more advanced movement. The richer South Americans send their sons and daughters for education to America or Paris, and one result of this was that the native universities, teachers and scholars alike, became centres of propagation of the new gospel. Political and military life is as corrupt as that of the Church, and, as Mrs. Rosita Forbes says, Communism or Socialism seemed to many to be the only alternative. The movement grew so rapidly that the wealthy, the politicians, and the army leaders formed the usual Fascist coalition, and the Church very warmly supported it.



Less than two years ago I described in an American publication the position which the workers had won in Brazil. There was a Department of Labour, and the law compelled employers to give every worker a holiday, with full pay, every year. The work is now in ruins, and Church and Fascism are triumphant. The rebellion was provoked in the same way as in Austria. All through the year 1935 the organization of the Fascist forces was encouraged, while the advanced parties were under the ban of the police. There was a warm debate on the matter in Congress. In November the Communists rose and were defeated. From the carefully-worded cables that were sent over here most people understood that just a few thousand hot-headed working-men underpaid agitators had rebelled and had been properly crushed. One should read the account in our *Annual Register*. It says that by the end of the year there were 10,000 political prisoners in jail, and "among these were university professors and many other distinguished Brazilians belonging to the best society" (p. 312). The struggle was by no means purely economic.

Part of the truth evaded the censorship in the course of 1936. Most people have a natural inclination to regard stories of the torture of political prisoners in the twentieth century as fabrications, or at least heavy exaggerations. Fortunately, the general prejudice against Germany permitted a free circulation of news in regard to torture in that country; and I have shown that there is unquestionable proof of such torture in Poland during ten or more years and in Spain in 1934. Reports of similar torture by the clerical Fascists of Brazil began to appear in the London Press in July (1936), and the revolting truth soon appeared. The Brazilian police arrested as "Moscow spies" Viscountess Hastings and her sister-in-

law Lady Cameron. It is a curious sidelight on reports of Bolshevik propaganda, for these English aristocratic ladies were simply gathering material for a travel book. They were put in jail with the political prisoners at Rio de Janeiro, and Viscount Hastings told in a letter to the Press what they had seen of the way in which Holy Church and her new allies treat rebels against them.

In the prison they saw men and women who had been so badly beaten that they could only move with the greatest difficulty: a man's wife had been beaten insensible in front of him to make him confess; the hands of another man had been mutilated by having iron spikes driven underneath the nails. The prisoners were entirely cut off from the outside world, mostly ignorant of the charges against them, and completely unable to get satisfactory legal and medical assistance. The day before my wife and sister were arrested the American boy, Victor Baron, was found dead in prison after 'questioning.' Actually reported in the Brazilian newspapers of the time were the complaints of the officers imprisoned in the Pedro I concerning the inhuman conditions under which they were detained. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The public, told almost every day that these things are peculiar to the Chinese and to Red revolutionaries, was astounded; yet this, I have shown, is the traditional and constant practice of allies of the Church.

The reaction spreads over South America. In Chile the White Guard of 15,000 Fascist youths has the special blessing of the Church. In Peru the leader of the Apra who nearly became President a few years ago was put in jail on a false charge of assassination. Argentina has driven out all bodies with a suspicion of "Redness" and has recently created six new dioceses, complete with new archbishops and bishops, and got the Pope to make a cardinal, for the first time in history, of a South American

<sup>1</sup> *News-Chronicle*, July 14th, 1936.

bishop. And the Pope's special envoy, Cardinal Pacelli, the leading statesman of the Church, and probably the next Pope, makes a triumphal tour from one Republic to another and sees freethinking Presidents and politicians and generals kneeling in the dust for his blessing. God, he says, is bringing the erring faithful back to the fold. He knows how.

## CHAPTER XI

### PAPAL POLICY IN OTHER LANDS

**L**ET us be quite clear what precise reproach we make to the Church of Rome for its activity during the past ten years. Few will doubt that without any intrigue or entreaty on the part of the Pope, our age was bound to witness an acrid and violent struggle between the two politico-economic forces which we may roundly call Bolshevism and Fascism. It would be ludicrous to suggest that the Vatican had either the power or the intellectual ability to organize the world-reaction to the growth of Communism and Socialism. That organization is due to a combination of factors and interests which do not concern this inquiry.

We may, indeed, still without quitting the ground of neutrality, go farther, and wonder if the raw Communism which emerged in Russia from the ravages of the Great War is not largely responsible for the early stages of the degeneration of our age. Admittedly it advocated a violent class-war and a seizure of political power by violence. Communists have learned the lesson which I pointed out to such friends as I had in that movement seventeen years ago. If you plainly say that you will fight with weapons instead of ideas, you impose the conditions of the struggle upon your opponent, or at least give him a pretext for violence.

Some may, therefore, be diverted from the main point of this inquiry by a superficial plea that the Church really

rendered service in supporting the opposition to the growth of Communism or Socialism. If any reader of this book thinks that it was right to support this opposition no matter what form it assumed, from the suppression of liberty to such tortures and executions as we have seen, I have no mind to argue with him. But that is hardly likely. The danger is that, since the ugly truths which I give here are usually suppressed or, if some of them have appeared in the Press, are now thrust out of memory by a persistent repetition of the libel—as the whole contents of this book show it to be—that “ Reds ” alone commit such outrages, a man may get a false perspective and regard the action of the Papacy too leniently.

When the whole of the facts are stated, we see quite plainly that the Papacy, supported by the national branches of the Church in every country, has used a politico-economic world-movement to destroy its own critics and to check the extraordinary leakage of the last ten years: has, in order to reconcile the world to the violence of that movement, taken the lead in the false cry of persecution of religion and of outrages upon ministers of religion; and has not only not uttered a syllable of moral indignation at the vile outrages and callous glorification of war which have poisoned our age, but has fully, in some cases vitally, supported the offending parties, and now shrieks for an extension of the horrors to other countries. It is quite easy to recognize the shame of Rome's conduct without taking sides in the essential struggle.

Take the case of Spain. It is now said that the war is the outcome of a syndicate of German and Italian industrial enterprises plotting, under the direction of their Leaders, to appropriate the mineral resources of Spain and Spanish Morocco. Even if this is true—and

it seems to have been an important part of the conspiracy—it is obvious that it could act only through insurgent generals who purported to deliver the religious people of Spain from their enemies-of-God oppressors. Only by means of such a plea could General Franco have, with the feeble forces he had at first, overcome three-fourths of rural Spain in two months. In point of fact, we saw, he announced himself at once as the Pope's Crusader, was fanatically supported by the bishops and clergy everywhere, and has a special Papal representative at Burgos and a Spanish rebel representative at the Vatican. It was the Spanish embassy at the Vatican City which first hoisted the rebel flag in Europe, and the Spanish embassies in other countries which then did the same explained that they were following the lead of the Vatican.<sup>1</sup> For the plot against the Spanish people and all the horrors that have resulted, the Pope and the Spanish Church are predominantly responsible, and the Pope openly blesses the revolt. But the Roman Church in Austria was even more plainly responsible for the outrages in that country, the Roman Church in Poland and South America openly displays its activity, and the Pope himself put Mussolini's power upon a firm foundation, and has kept it there through seven years of tyranny and the debauching of the mind of the Italian people. We have now to see how the Vatican has pursued an equally unscrupulous regard for its own interests as an ecclesiastical corporation in other lands.

### § 1. *How the Vatican Wooed Red Russia*

Anything less "Red" (in the ugly implication of the word) than Russia to-day, or at any time in the last seven

<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, November 10th and 18th.

or eight years, it would be difficult to imagine. Children are more generously and affectionately treated than in any other country, and a larger proportion of the public resources is spent upon education and social service than anywhere else. In the last few years all impartial, in fact even anti-Bolshevik, visitors who know Russia and the Russian language intimately — Countess Skariatina, General Berry, Sir Bernard Pares, etc.—tell us that a settled and remarkably improved civilization is established in that country. Apart from such petty carping as that of Sir Walter Citrine, the critics who wish still to make our flesh creep about Bolshevism repeat stale news (or fiction) about the Ogpu and the aggression of the Godless League, both of which were abandoned several years ago, or still staler news about the horrible conditions that lasted during the White War and the confusion that followed, or rave about Russian morals, which are much nearer to puritanism than they were in Tsarist days, or the persecution of religion. The Pope and Roman Catholics everywhere are the most strident exponents of what is now, in effect, a campaign of mendacious libel.

There is only one of these charges which it is necessary to consider here : that of the persecution of religion. This, humorously enough, is the chief point in the Pope's indictment of Russia to-day, while he is trying to encourage Germany, which hitherto he had heavily censured for the same crime, to take up the Holy War upon Russia. He knows, of course, as we all do, that no nation in the world would launch a single division upon another nation to-day because it persecutes some Church or other. He knows that he is merely offering a consecrated cloak for quite other motives—the seizure of the mineral resources of Spain, Russia, and Mexico. But even worse than this is the fact that he must know that at least there has been

no sort of persecution of religion in Russia for many years, and that in the days when, in the opinion of many, there was such persecution, *the Vatican made repeated offers of friendship*. That is one of the many facts I here prove that have been kept from the English-reading public.

I have already given (in the first chapter) an illustration of the gross statements upon which the belief in a "terrible persecution of religion" is based. A writer on Russia with a considerable knowledge of that country and its language (and a Russian wife, I understand) makes the Bolsheviks kill eight times as many bishops as there were in the entire country! It is difficult to ascertain how many priests were killed in the year (1918-19) when the Allies so lucklessly supported the White invaders, whose savagery provoked a savage reaction, and the still worse year when the Poles continued to support them. The Roman Catholic clergy in Russia were mainly Poles, and they sided with the invaders. That they and the bulk of the Orthodox clergy then continued for several years to abet the conspiracies that were hatched in Poland we have not only abundant proof, but a dozen confessions of priests and prelates, and some of them were published in a few English papers at the time they were made. I will quote a few from M. Sherwood's *The Soviet War on Religion* (1930).

Metropolitan Sergius, head of the Orthodox Church, assured a group of foreign correspondents at Moscow on February 15th, 1930, that there had been persecution only of priests who meddled in anti-Soviet plots, and three other leading prelates of the Church supported him. They said in reply to a question :

In no way do these stories correspond to facts. They are all inventions and slanders, unworthy of serious people's attention. Individual priests have been



prosecuted, not for religious activity, but on the charge of some anti-Government action. Moreover, this naturally has taken the form, not of persecution or cruelty, but of the procedure established by law (p. 28).

The Patriarch Tikhon (p. 25) had made the same declaration and confession in 1923 in an address to the members of his Church :

We recognize our offence before the Soviet Government—namely, our many passive and active anti-soviet activities. . . .

Two Metropolitans and five archbishops had on August 8th, 1927, published a letter actually thanking the Government. The leading Jewish rabbis and some of the Roman Catholic priests joined in the protestation. One well-known priest, an Apostolic Missionary, Nicholas Tolstoy, stated in the Press in 1929 that priests had been during the last ten or twelve years supporting in every possible way the aggressive aims of Poland in the Ukraine. . . . This goes on in full touch with Poland and with the blessing of the Vatican (p. 18).

I must refer the reader to Sherwood's booklet for a dozen pages of similar admissions, but for all impartial writers the libel was settled years ago. In his *Post-War World* (1935, p. 189), one of the best histories of the last twenty years, Mr. J. H. Jackson observes that "no case has been discovered of a priest or anyone else being punished for the practice of religion." In her *Catholic Church in Russia* (1923) Miss Almedingen, who is a zealous Catholic and lived in Russia until 1922, speaks of "persecution," but she gives hardly any detail, and she admits that the priests who were shot had broken the law. "From a Soviet point of view, of course, the charges were true," she says (p. 96). This "persecution" was in 1922, when the Poles were busiest with their plots, and in that year a

special representative of the Pope, the American Jesuit Father Edmund A. Walsh, was in Poland. The booklet (*Why Pope Pius XI Asked Prayers for Russia*) which this priest published in America eight years afterwards contains the most fragrant collection of martyr-stories in the whole of Catholic literature about Russia, and the circumstances are extraordinary.

A work by two very orthodox and devout French Catholics to which I have already referred, *Le Vatican et le Monde Moderne* (1933), by G. London and C. Pichon, has a few admiring—and surprising—pages on the attitude of the Vatican to Russia. “The fall of Tsardom,” they correctly say, “was greeted at Rome with real relief” (p. 404), and the Vatican tried to approach Lenin and his colleagues. These were at first so little hostile to the Catholics that they removed the disabilities (or “persecution”) which the Orthodox Church had hitherto imposed upon them. In 1918, when the full fury of the “sadistic” revolution is supposed to have erupted, the Catholics had, for the first time in their history, their very sacred “Corpus Christi” procession in the streets of Petrograd. The Bolsheviks took little notice of the Roman Catholics, since they had only twelve churches, with congregations mainly of poor Poles, in Petrograd and Moscow together.

The civil war and the Polish conspiracy followed, and priests of either Church who were implicated in them were punished like civilians. Father Walsh wildly speaks of “six thousand martyrs” and horrid torture—eyes of priests burned with quicklime, etc.—but he does not tell his readers that the Pope chose just this time for another friendly approach. The French Catholic writers show that in 1922, when Soviet Russia was first admitted to the comity of civilized nations by being invited to the international conference at Genoa, the Vatican got the Italian

authorities to arrange that the Archbishop of Genoa should be the *vis-à-vis* at dinner of Comrade Chicherin, and they had a most amiable conversation. As a result, the Vatican was graciously permitted to join in the relief work which the terrible famine in Russia necessitated, and Father Walsh was put at the head of the mission. He was to abstain from proselytism or religious work; but the French writers again ingenuously tell us how he had large coloured portraits of the Pope on the walls of his relief station. "He distributed parcels and served soup," they say, "under the portrait of Pius XI in the act of blessing" (p. 406).

Father Walsh says that he was in Russia until 1923. It was 1924, but he conceals this. For this friendly and "entirely benevolent" mission had hardly left Russia when the Pope (December 18th, 1924) made a scurrilous attack upon the Soviet Government. Instead of merely "asking prayers for Russia," as the Jesuit says, he appealed to "all heads of Governments" to see the dangers of letting Socialism take root. In other words, he began the plot, which he repeats to-day, of promising the support of his Church to any Governments that will attack Russia. Even after this he made a further attempt, to which I have already referred. He induced the French to use their influence to get a Catholic bishop admitted to Russia to pay a pious visit to the remnant of his Church. The bishop was—London and Pichon tell us—a French Jesuit, who had been hurriedly turned into a bishop, and he was promptly expelled again for intrigue.

So once more the Pope serves up the stale old stories of persecution of religion. It may be remembered that the question was raised in our House of Commons in 1930, and the reply of Sir Esmond Ovey, British Ambassador at Moscow, includes this assurance :

There is no religious persecution in Russia in the strict sense of the term persecution, and no case has been discovered of a priest or any one else being punished for practising religion.<sup>1</sup>

This is now so far recognized by impartial people that even so cautious a paper as the *News-Chronicle* now permits its leading correspondent, Mr. A. J. Cummings, to write :

Russia, in fact, went "godless," not because of the innate wickedness of its Bolshevik revolutionary leaders, but because it was the almost inevitable reaction from the greed, cruelty, and vile corruption of the Orthodox Russian Church under the Tsars . . . the Bolsheviks persecuted large numbers of priests and their faithful followers in the conviction that religious practices and counter-revolutionary activities were synonymous terms. But a change for the better has taken place.<sup>2</sup>

But the Pope, bitterly disappointed in his ambition to get the Orthodox Church forcibly subjected to his authority, serves up the old libels with more bitter and fiery sauce than ever. He sees the Church which he coveted crumbling away, and, as everywhere else, he appeals to the sword and the knout. What the aims of his allies are, what brutalities they perpetrate, what sort of a commonweal they destroy, and what violence they do to the will of the people, he cares not. He has lost.

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, April 24th.

<sup>2</sup> Special article "In Defence of Russia," January 9th, 1937, p. 6. I do not care to criticize so admirable an article, but the second sentence I have quoted is inaccurate. As Miss Almedingen says, the priests were tried in court and convicted of breaking the law. There is no change in either the law or the application of it. When Mr. Cummings finds a revival of religion because thirty-six churches in Moscow were crowded last Easter, he forgets two things : first, that country folk flock to Moscow at Easter ; secondly, that thirty-six churches—all that are left out of 1600, by the way—surely do not mean much in a city of 3,000,000 people and Easter visitors.

§ 2. *Losses and Plots in Czecho-Slovakia*

Speaking at Conway Hall in September (1936), I said that the next victim, after Spain, of the Italo-German buccaneers would be Czecho-Slovakia. I understand that much cheerful scepticism was expressed, for no paper had at that time even mentioned the name in connection with Fascist ambitions. At the most critical stage in modern history we move in a fog and cannot foresee the events of even a month ahead. This lamentable weakness of an age that proudly calls itself scientific is obviously due to the suppression or distortion of facts in our organs of public instruction. Had the facts, as I have given them, been plainly put before the public day by day, the delicacy of the position of Czecho-Slovakia would be clear to all.

It is a patch of democracy, and very real and enlightened democracy, in a morass of Fascism: Austria, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugo-Slavia, and Greece. The control of it is necessary to complete the projected bloc of Fascist peoples, from Portugal to the Black Sea, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, which is needed for the isolation of western democracies. Already, so swiftly do the dark forces move in the mist of our time, the Press speaks freely of the danger. Attention is drawn to a grave article, obviously inspired by the German authorities, in the *Völkischer Beobachter* (January 8th). It complains sourly and ominously of the "increasing Bolshevization" of Czecho-Slovakia.<sup>1</sup> On almost the same day the Press announces that Switzerland has hidden its gold in the mountains. To that pitch of apprehension of mediæval banditry have we sunk in Europe.

<sup>1</sup> *Evening Standard*, January 9th, p. 6.

But what has this to do with the Roman Church? Surely the Pope has no vital interest in Czecho-Slovakia? According to the writer of the "political chronicle" in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (August 1st, 1935), the Vatican has every reason to be satisfied with Catholic progress in Czecho-Slovakia. As long as the province had remained under the yoke of Austria the Roman Church had "persecuted" the Protestants far worse than Russia has persecuted religion during the last five years. At the separation the Protestants were jubilant, and the Catholics, who are most numerous in Slovakia, were organized in a movement to claim the autonomy of that province: obviously with a view to a return to Austria as soon as the political circumstances permitted. This was so definitely a clerical manoeuvre that its leader was a priest, Father Klinka, and the Papal Nuncio at Prague boldly declared in favour of the movement in a letter published on August 13th, 1933.

It was a typical piece of Vatican intrigue of the old type. On the one hand the Czechs were building up a strong national Protestant Church with a pronounced antagonism to Austria; on the other hand, the late President Masaryk, the finest constructive statesman in post-war Europe, was a well-known Rationalist, and under his patronage the Rationalist body had become the most numerous and enterprising in Europe. But this separatist movement in a small State with two races of different religion was a grave danger.

The Nuncio was expelled, and the Vatican then exacted of France one of the many returns (as I explained) for its support in Alsace-Lorraine and its aid in checking the royalists. To the annoyance and concern of the Czechs, the French, their closest allies, organized a great demonstration, at which Church, Papacy, and Government were

alike represented, in honour of the eleventh centenary of the establishment of the first Catholic Church in Slovakia. President Masaryk and his sceptical colleagues had to yield. The Vatican was requested to send a Legate to preside over a Catholic Congress that was to be held at Prague, and the French Cardinal Verdier was sent, and was received with gorgeous ceremony. The heads of the Polish and Austrian Churches and 50,000 Czecho-Slovak Catholics gathered at Prague. "The Papacy," says the Catholic writer, "has once more shown itself, above all the nations, an element of concord and understanding."

The writer is careful to omit to state that a few weeks before he wrote his article, or in July, 1935, 40,000 Czecho-Slovak Freethinkers had held an equally enthusiastic demonstration in Prague: that at the previous census nearly 1,000,000 citizens had declared themselves of "no religion"—the highest proportion making such a declaration anywhere—and that the Communists and Socialists polled 1,700,000 votes, representing nearly a third of the adults of the country. He seems, in fact, to be ignorant that a very high proportion of these were seceders from the Catholic Church. By a rare and extraordinary indiscretion the Catholic *Tablet* published certain figures which show how uneasy the Vatican really was. Mr. P. Crichton-Stuart describes how, during a visit to Czecho-Slovakia, he was astonished to read of secessions *en masse* from his Church. A priest whom he asked about it said :

It is true. Up to 1930 nearly 1,900,000 left the Church, and, while about 150,000 joined the Protestant and Orthodox communities, the rest are without religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tablet*, October 31st, 1936, p. 591. In the next issue (November 7th, p. 628) the writer declares that the report of Russian aerodromes and Russian military instructors in the country, on which the present German threat is based, is false.

This is an even worse collapse of a national branch of the Roman Church than in France, Italy, or Spain. So the Vatican entered into an alliance with the Government to check the rapid growth of Socialism and Communism, and was rewarded with the right of religious instruction in the schools. But the exodus from the Church continues. The urban Czechs, and very many in the country, smile at the worn *clichés* of the Catholic propagandist. There is nothing for it but the bludgeon. Germany begins to move, and France to discover the price of an alliance with the Vatican. "The destruction of Bolshevism in Czechoslovakia" will soon be added to the Litany.

### § 3. *Tortuous Paths in Belgium*

In Yugo-Slavia the Vatican is pursuing a somewhat similar intrigue under less favourable conditions. The heads of the Orthodox Church are so angry with the Government for drafting a Concordat which gives the Roman Church a privileged position that, as I write, the Serb Patriarch is threatening to excommunicate the Premier. As the reader will know, not only do Italy and Yugo-Slavia watch each other across the Adriatic like two dogs with a bone lying between them, but Serbia is greatly weakened by the chronic revolt of the Croats, who are mainly Roman Catholics. It is an analogous situation to that of Alsace-Lorraine and that of Ireland in the nineteenth century, and the Vatican has long experience in deriving profit from such situations. Our only interest in it here is that the Vatican again allies itself with a Fascist Government.

Much more interesting is the situation in Belgium. I told in an earlier chapter how I reminded the Belgian Socialist leader in Paris that one needs a long spoon when one sups with the devil. He laughed at the idea that the



Church could ever injure his party; just as, a few years earlier, Enrico Ferri, the Italian Socialist leader, had confidently assured me that his party had ceased even to think about the Vatican and its decaying power. Already Socialism is almost extinct, or buried alive, in Italy, and the Church in Belgium turns upon its Socialist allies of twelve years ago and encourages a Fascist force which aspires to repeat the murderous triumph of Hitler and Mussolini.

As a result of my careful analysis of all the available figures and my observations during a year spent at the Catholic University of Louvain, I found in 1909 that the Church in Belgium had lost about 2,500,000 members and still numbered about 4,500,000. The urban middle-class was predominantly Liberal and anti-clerical, so that, as long as the radical workers co-operated with them, clericals and anti-clericals were fairly evenly balanced in political power. The growth of Communism and Socialism destroyed this alliance, and the advanced parties entered into a working agreement with the Church against the Liberals. An ironic florilegium could be compiled from the Belgian Catholic literature of those days. From ten to twenty years ago, in fact, Catholic apologetic literature in most countries made professions which the present activity of the Church in a dozen countries tramples into the mud.

The recoil came swiftly in Belgium. In a night, as it were, one of those blustering adventurers whom the modern world seems willing to regard as statesmen, Léon Dégrelle, organized the Rexist (Clerical-Fascist) Party, and rapidly attracted thousands to it by the familiar methods of unscrupulous promises and threats of violence. Although the movement professes to be as intensely Catholic as that of General Franco, the Church, as usual, waited

until it gathered sufficient strength to show a chance of eventual victory. Now we have the young adventurer in open alliance with Mussolini and the Vatican, and using the Italian broadcasting station to libel and vituperate the Belgian Government. He appealed, the Press says, for a "joint effort of Italians and Belgians to bar the way to Bolshevism." Will the Fascist bloc, with the help of the Pope, presently include Belgium? Will one more people that has for a century fought and sacrificed for freedom of thought and conscience be bludgeoned into docility? And what will France, when it finds Fascists to the north, south, and east of it, think of the days when it listened complacently to the smooth assurances of Italy and the Vatican while they steadily built up the aggressive power of Fascism?

#### § 4. *Loyal Ireland*

It will be impossible for many years to tell the full story of Roman policy in Ireland, but the general outline is clear and is worth considering. It is one of the few humorous aspects of the Catholic controversy that so many of the clerical apologists who protest that the Papacy never interferes in politics are Irish priests. In few countries has Rome interfered more scandalously, for its own profit, than it has in Ireland. The official life of Pope Leo XIII by Mgr. T'Serclaes makes very clear what most people who took any interest in the matter suspected: that the Papacy tried over and over again in the second half of the last century to get concessions from England by rebuking the opposition to it in Ireland. In 1883 the Pope strained the loyalty of the Irish more severely than ever by forbidding them to subscribe to the Parnell Testimonial Fund, and in 1888 he formally condemned the Plan of Campaign upon which all the Irish

leaders were agreed. Ireland was poor and would, it was thought at Rome, be loyal in any case. England was rich, and something much stronger than argument was needed to impress Protestants and check the very considerable leakage.

But the world-fever which after the War spread its disturbing influence as far as Mexico and Brazil did not leave Ireland unaffected. On the one hand, such exposures of the ghastly exploitation of the people by the priests as that contained in Michael McCarthy's (a Catholic lawyer) *Priests and People in Ireland*, which was widely read in that country, opened the eyes of thousands to the real meaning of Rome's attachment to the Island of Saints. Not even in pre-revolutionary Spain did the Church exact so heavy a share of the slender wealth of the country, and the procedure was often gross. I am not generally regarded by Catholics as an oracle whom it is wise to consult, but some years ago I was approached by two Irish ladies—one came to my house in London from Kerry—asking me to help them to recover large sums of money of which, at the death of relatives, a bishop in one case and a community of monks in the other had defrauded them. On the other hand, Socialism and even Communism got a footing amongst the workers of the cities, and scepticism spread with them. Indeed, the Sinn Fein Movement itself was at first extremely anti-clerical. Lecturing in Dublin in the early days of the movement, I met a large group of the leaders—they came furtively, after dark, like conspirators—at a friend's house, and they assured me that even Ireland was turning.

It is more Catholic than ever, and it is chiefly through the Irish representatives at the League of Nations that the Pope gets progressive schemes, like the proposal to enlighten the world 'about birth-control, blocked and

reactionary schemes, like the proposal to forbid all criticism of religion on the radio, put forward. In the early phase of the Nationalist Movement the Church prudently allowed priests to assist both sides. When Mr. de Valera, with his American funds, proved the stronger adventurer and promised most to the Church, Rome, through the Irish hierarchy, smote his enemies with the spiritual weapon of anathema.

The bargain entailed the customary compromises on both sides. In 1924 the Irish clergy wanted to annul the marriage of Countess Marconi (Miss O'Brien), who was to leave her Protestant husband and marry a Catholic. They had been married for nineteen years, yet Rome permitted the lady to swear (as had been done in the Marlborough-Vanderbilt case in America) that she had not *really* consented to the marriage in 1905, and it was declared null from the start! In 1928 the Archbishop of Baltimore complained to Rome, in the name of Irish-American donors, of the scandalous misappropriation of a million dollars by the Irish Jesuits. The Pope declared in favour of the Jesuits.

On the other hand, De Valera has had, at the bidding of the clergy, to pass one reactionary law after another to close the mouths of their critics. In the opinion of good judges it is the influence of the Church alone that prevents him from declaring Ireland independent of the British Empire. England might not fight if he did so, but the stream of 20,000 or 30,000 Irish immigrants a year to swell the Church in England would cease, and tens of thousands of Irish Catholics in our Civil Service—there are colleges in Ireland that specialize on placing them in it—would become foreigners. So Ireland remains as pious and poor as Poland, kept in the outer darkness by its priests so that they may continue to exploit its simple people.

## CHAPTER XII

### FALSE FRONT IN THE UNITED STATES

THE streams of immigration which flowed over and populated the vast area of the United States in the last century started in so high a proportion from Catholic countries or provinces in Europe that more than one social writer anticipated that the majority of the nation would be Roman Catholic by the second decade of the twentieth century. Fortunately for America, it was not until very late in the last century that Rome got a moderately sensible appreciation of its great opportunity. So simple a fact as that Ireland had had a population of 5,500,000 at the beginning of the century and only 5,000,000 at its close—that, in other words, there were somewhere in the English-speaking world at least 15,000,000 descendants of Irish Catholics—very slowly dawned upon what some persist in regarding as the wonderful intellect of the Vatican. As a result, the majority of them were lost to the Church. I showed, with Catholic authorities in support, in 1909 that at least 14,000,000 descendants of Catholic immigrants had been lost in the United States and nearly 2,000,000 in England.

In the latter part of the last century, when America so rapidly advanced in wealth and population, the American bishops set about a serious organization of their Church. As the Irish, Italian, Polish, and German and Austrian Catholics who chiefly composed it had predominantly settled in the cities and industrial towns, the work was not difficult. The chief obstacle was that the American

mind resented the aloofness of the Church from its own spirit, and had not forgotten how vast numbers of its most enterprising settlers had fled from an even more brutal tyranny in Catholic Europe, especially in the fifties and sixties, than the *Mayflower* fathers had left behind them in England. The first task of the bishops, therefore, if they would win prestige and the chance of conversions in the cities, was to "Americanize" their Church. An intense propaganda to show that the Roman Church was wholly reconciled with modern ideas of freedom, democracy, toleration, and enlightenment was conducted. The workers were organized in very defiant bodies, and the bishops and archbishops even told America that they would not obey if the Pope gave orders that were at variance with the American spirit. If the Pope meddled in civil matters, Cardinal Gibbons wrote, "any Catholic would be bound not to obey the Pope as, rather, his conscience would bind him absolutely to disobey." How Rome retorted, in the Pope's letter on Americanism, by administering to the bishops a public snub which was as stupid as it was arrogant is now ancient history. But the Vatican yielded in time to America's golden persuasion, and the chief interest of the American branch of the Church to-day lies in the glaring contrast between the liberty which the Vatican allows it and the real law and practice which I have described.

### § 1. *The Church as Big Business*

Some years ago, when I was lecturing (not on religion) in Seattle, my local agent complained that one paper refused to accept advertisements of the lectures. With great difficulty we at last elicited the fact that the Roman Catholic bishop held a large number of shares in the paper, which few people in the city seemed to know or suspect.

I went on to San Francisco, and, passing the City Hall one day with a friend, I was startled to hear him say, and insist, that "the Catholic Church bosses that building from the top floor to the basement." I found in Boston that Catholics did in fact there so dominate the Council that no book could be used in the schools—the public schools, not the Catholic parochial schools—which they did not pass. Chicago I found, on the occasion of a Eucharistic Congress, almost surrendered to the clergy who claimed that more than one third of the citizens in that oasis of peace and virtue are Catholics. At Baltimore university-teachers told me that they might not sneeze if the priests objected, and at Washington I found a bureau for "submitting the Catholic point of view" to the President on national issues. At New York a publisher to whom I offered a book criticizing the situation told me that no New York publisher would dare to issue it, and Mr. Heywood Broun, one of the most respected of New York journalists, wrote of the Catholic organizers that "there is not a single New York editor who does not live in terror of this group." In small towns mothers told me that teachers in the public schools recommended the Church to their young daughters in class daily, and civic officials refused to interfere.

In other words, in the Roman Catholic Church of that country what the Pope called Americanism has now taken the characteristic native form of Big Business; for, as we shall see in a moment, the power it exerts is out of all proportion to the number of its members. Probably the reader knows that all the Churches are elaborately organized in America, but none has so powerful or elaborate an organization as the Roman Church, because no other Church has the same gigantic wealth and income. The total value of Church property in the United States was \$670,000,000 in 1890 and is now, though the number of

Church members is certainly not doubled, about \$4,000,000,000 (£800,000,000). The Catholic Church no longer boasts of its share of this—possibly because there is a cry for the taxation of Church property—but, since it owned one-fifth of the whole in 1890 and one-fourth in 1906, it now must have about one-third, or certainly more than \$1,000,000,000. Its income is assessed by Catholic writers at \$800,000,000 a year. And this vast income is used in very large part for the purpose of getting further income. Between 1890 and 1906 the value of Church property generally rose by 85·1 per cent., but that of Catholic Church property rose by 147·7 per cent. In the last forty-five years the number of Catholic chapels has increased by 80 per cent, but the wealth of the Church has increased ten-fold.

Upon this massive basis rests the power of the Church in America. At the head of the organization are four cardinals, sixteen archbishops, 102 bishops, 29,782 priests, and 75,000 nuns (who run innumerable schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc.). Next to these are the teachers in the Catholic parochial schools, colleges, and universities, and the staffs of journalists on about fifty Catholic newspapers and magazines. With salaried secretaries, publicity-agents, and other secular employees there must be about a quarter of a million paid workers in the United States under the ensign M.A.C. (Make America Catholic). Mr. Bertrand Russell has expressed the opinion that it will be predominantly Catholic within fifty years: which, however, we shall find substantial reason to doubt.

But this paid staff, enormous as it is, uses an unpaid army of colossal proportions. The famous Knights of Columbus, the special inoculation of Catholic men against the virus of Socialism, number about 725,000. Not that they are all workers, for occasionally we find knights wealthy



enough to earn the title of Count (of the Papal Court) and strutting the stage or posing for the press camera-men like movie-actors. Nor is their activity confined to bribing and bullying editors, booksellers, librarians, etc.—I have known them to threaten restaurant-owners for allowing customers to read my Little Blue Books over their lunch—finding jobs for converts and new members. They, for instance, are part of the American peaceful penetration of Canada, preparing it for union with the United States, and to my certain knowledge the Premier of an important province of Canada is secretly initiated to the American K.C.'s.

Besides these there are 1500 branches of the National Council of Catholic Men, and there is the National Catholic Welfare Conference, under the direct supervision of the archbishops and bishops, which is particularly active in bullying the press, publishers, booksellers, politicians, writers, speakers, etc. In addition, the Paulists (a very important body of priests in America), Jesuits, etc., have their private armies for the propaganda of untruth and the suppression of truth. The Paulists boast that they distributed more than 2,000,000 pamphlets (of the "Catholic Truth" type) in a year and have given away free a quarter of a million copies of Cardinal Gibbons's *Faith of Our Fathers*. As to the ladies, those super-charged cylinders of the Catholic machine, there are hundreds of thousands of pale, tense enthusiasts in the Daughters of America, Church Extension Society, Catholic Instruction League, Catholic Hospital Association, and the various bodies I have already named. One sweet nun-like maid, reading in the paper that I was giving Rationalist lectures in her town, sent me her photograph and a blessed medal to wear next my skin, guaranteeing (in a quite charming letter) that it would "bring me back my faith."

§ 2. *Real Numerical Strength.*

We shall see in a moment how all this enthusiasm for a mediæval superstition is maintained in the twentieth century. The most amusing aspect of the matter is that the soldiers of this army of something like 5,000,000 unpaid enthusiasts are all absolutely convinced (unlike their priests) that Catholic Truth is so luminous and holy that every person to whom it is fairly put is sure to embrace it, and they have four broadcasting stations and fifty papers and occasional articles in hundreds of others, in addition to the five million enthusiastic apostles for presenting it; yet the number of Catholics in America hardly keeps pace with the growth of population.

I examined all available statistics in an article on "Catholics in the United States" in my *Appeal to Reason Library* (No. I, 1935). They refer to the year 1930 and would differ little to-day. The *Christian Century*, in an impartial attempt to estimate church populations in America, gave the Catholic total as about 18,000,000. It pointed out that, while the far less numerous Baptists had gained (they said) 74,000 new adherents in a year and the Lutherans 56,000, the Catholics claimed only 17,000: which seems rather a slender return for the sweated labour of 5,000,000 apostles and an expenditure, for that purpose alone, of tens of millions. However, Catholics themselves put their number at about 20,000,000. They impress the public with figures which look like the results of exact counting down to a unit, and then they differ from each other by millions. In 1928 the *Official Catholic Directory* give the total as 20,091,593, the *Catholic Press Directory* gave it as 21,453,928, and the Catholic writer who was permitted to deal with the subject in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* gave the "official" figure as

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19,689,049 and airily raised it to the "true" figure of 25,000,000.

All such figures are, in spite of their appearance of actual counting, useless. In my clerical days I once assisted a priest in East London at the week-end, and he compiled, under my eyes and with cheerfully cynical reflections, the statistics of his parish for the authorities at Westminster. He reported that there were 5000 "Catholics" in his parish and admitted to me that 4000 of them never came near the Church. Smaller and more settled parishes keep detailed lists—hence the odd hundreds and tens and even units—but all priests have one thing in common in making such returns: they never strike off seceders. The Church, as I explained, does not recognize secessions.

In America this practice, and the downright dishonesty of the statistics issued to the public, have drawn open and disgusted protests from some of the Catholics themselves. In his *Will America Become Catholic?* (1931—a book which every person who is interested in the point ought to read) Mr. John F. Moore gives a number of these protests and much other evidence. The Catholic *Fortnightly Review*, the nearest approach to a truthful periodical in American Catholic literature, quoted, and heavily censured, in its issue of January 1st, 1927, a letter in which one of the Catholic bishops expressly instructs his priests to include "bad" Catholics (seceders) in their returns because "the different denominations are hard at work to make as large a showing as possible" and "Catholics cannot afford to be backward in this matter." The Catholic writer points out that the Catholics of this particular bishop's diocese were given in the census as 21,268, but the *Official Catholic Directory* give them as 39,450; and he talks darkly about "prevarication or downright stupidity" and "padded statistics." Moore shows that detailed

inquiries in various cities proved that on the average more than a third of the folk who were included in the Catholic statistics had definitely left the Church: in one city 28 per cent., in another 38, in another 42, while in one city-parish twenty-four out of thirty-seven families listed as "Catholic" had nothing to do with the Church.

### § 3. *Intrigue and Mendacious Propaganda*

There may be 15,000,000 genuine Roman Catholics—certainly not more than 16,000,000—in the United States. When responsible Church authorities like the President of St. Patrick's College (California), Father Ayrinhac, publicly claim that they have a right to count seceders as Catholics "even after joining an heretical sect"—when they have formally become Protestants—the most conservative reader will see that it is reasonable enough to reduce the official figure of 20,000,000 to not more than 16,000,000, as I have shown definite ground for doing. I leave it to such a reader to characterize a Church which thus makes up the figures it publishes and does not warn the public about its peculiar methods. This means, in any case, that the Roman Church in America is, if you bear in mind the high birth-rate of its Poles, Italians, and Irish, not holding its ground with the general growth of population. It has no prospect of outnumbering Protestants, much less of ever becoming the majority of the population (120,000,000), the greater part of whom do not belong to any Church.

This is well known to the clergy. Comparing notes with ex-priests in America, some of whom, successfully concealing their secession and moving to distant cities, occupy positions of distinction—I knew one whose wife, a New York society lady, never learned that he was an ex-priest—I gathered that as in England at least half of the priests are sceptical about some or all of the doctrines

they preach. Making every allowance for a very sincere minority (perhaps, one-tenth of them), they on the whole just form an economic corporation of a clerical character and regard the laity as the proper instruments to promote the wealth, prestige, and power of the corporation. Even, however, when they are in private completely sceptical and cynical, the lack of belief does not lower their zeal for the "conversion of America." It is their profession, and they earn promotion by results. But they fully realize that the pious layman's idea of converting folk by simply telling them the truth about Catholic teaching is childish. At a prodigious cost in money and energy they claim only to "convert" some 20,000 out of the 120,000,000 Americans every year; and these conversions are often a matter of business or social influence or for the purpose of a mixed marriage, while the secessions annually amount to hundreds of thousands. They have, therefore, since the rise of a powerful Fascist body is not probable in America—though offers have been made to American generals to lead a "march on Washington"—to rely upon other tactics, and these are, chiefly, political intrigue and complete falsification of the law and ideals of the Church.

I am in this work refraining from any emphasis on obscure intrigues, and will recall only a few well-known instances. In 1928, when the Catholic world was fluttered by the announcement that Al Smith had been selected as Democratic candidate for the Presidency, and the united support of the "Wets," the Democrats, and Catholics seemed to promise a victory, one Catholic monthly, *The Missionary* (October), indiscreetly wrote that "early in the administration of Governor Smith as President of the United States" there would be a stampede of the great majority of the nation into the Church. The crushing defeat of Smith, in spite of the alliance with the anti-

Prohibitionists, sobered them, but one feature of the campaign must be kept on record. In the third chapter I quoted part of a declaration published by Smith in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In this letter, written for him (as was afterwards revealed) by an ecclesiastic, Smith declared that the Church no longer insisted on being a State establishment, admitted the equality in law of all sects, and granted freedom of expression and the right of parents to choose the education of their children. When, a year later, Pope Pius XI insisted at Rome that Church Law emphatically refused these things, his entire letter was suppressed in America.

It was the powerful Democratic organization in New York which goes by the name of Tammany that initiated the campaign of Smith. So respectable a paper as *Collier's Weekly* said of the typical Tammany politician that "he does not know, or, if he does know, he does not care a rap that the entire system has its being in prostitution" (February 11th, 1933). Yet, the Catholic hierarchy in New York works very closely with this body. Of the thirty-six captains of Tammany's divisions of New York all but two, who are Jews, are Catholics, and Cardinal Hayes has been represented on its Board of Strategy since 1931 by Mgr. Chadwick, pastor of the church which these Catholic politicians frequent. When Roosevelt won his first victory he was compelled to take Roman Catholics into his Cabinet, and they promptly obliged the Church. Sexual morality is as loose in America as anywhere in the world, but the Government had maintained a strict rule that no literature about birth-control should be carried by the mails. Just at this point the American clergy adopted the supposed system of birth-control of a Japanese scientist, and the Catholic Postmaster-General permitted them to send it by mail. The system is a cruel fraud, but an enormous profit

on the small book (price \$1) expounding it and calendars connected with it went into the coffers of the Church.

The Father Coughlin episode before Roosevelt's re-election is a very remarkable illustration of Vatican procedure. Although the bankers and financiers, against whom the priest thundered, are rarely Catholics, the richer faithful warmly resented his campaign, yet the bishops refused to silence him. As late as October 9th cables to the *Times* reflected the tortuousness of the Roman policy. Cardinal Pacelli, the Pope's most important representative, who was then in New York, refused to answer questions about Coughlin, yet Dr. Ryan, head of the Catholic University at Washington and regarded as the Church's most eminent spokesman on social questions, roundly denounced Coughlin on the wireless and urged Catholics to support Roosevelt. What exactly happened is not known—I have, at least, not read any explanation—but the heads of the Church and the Roman authorities were clearly held up by the utterly mendacious statements about the millions of his followers broadcast by the priest. These seem to have been more closely examined on the eve of the election, and the episcopal extinguisher fell upon the economic charlatan.

In local politics Catholics are still more enterprising, as I have shown, but my chief interest here in their activity is that they are allowed to win power because they completely falsify the principles and ideals of their Church as well as its numerical importance, and the Vatican never interferes. At the very time when Pope Pius XI sternly and publicly insisted that the Church is above the State, must be established by the State, must absolutely control education, and must suppress all freedom of discussion of religion—when he emphatically said that this was the law of the Church for every country where it

got the power to enforce it—hundreds of books and thousands of articles and broadcast speeches in America assured the public that the Catholic Church had abandoned this position. Bishops no less than politicians expressly say that if the majority of Americans became Catholics, so that they could rule at Washington, they would make no change whatever in American practice: that they would maintain the separation of Church and State, grant perfect freedom to all religions and people of no religion, respect non-Catholic schools, and so on.

They have gone on from point to point until they now quite commonly insist that democracy, freedom, and toleration are the natural and logical consequences of the Church's teaching! Some of them, in face of the Pope's alliance with despotism and brutality in Europe and South America, hint, when they cannot suppress the facts, that the American Church may even refuse to obey the Pope and remain loyal to the American spirit. They know well that, if they attempted such a thing, their Church would shrink into insignificance in a year. No branch of the Catholic Church lays more stress in its teaching upon its connection with Rome, its continuity with the early and mediæval Church, and its position as part of a world-wide organization. They would have to disown a very large part of what they have taught their people to regard as sacred truth, and their authority would be shattered. American Catholicism faces a grave dilemma.

#### § 4. *Cultural and Moral Poverty*

Some will reflect that, however many millions may have seceded from the Church in America—and there are American Catholic writers who put the figure at 20,000,000—one requires some explanation how a Church with such doctrines and practices can retain even 15,000,000 in



so advanced a world. But as far as the vast majority of these are concerned there is no difficulty. They are masses of Italian, Irish, Polish, and other immigrants and their descendants of so poor an education that if they read anything at all beyond the more popular dailies, it is just a Catholic weekly which it would be polite to call a mush of inaccuracy and bad taste. No statement is too wild to be refused insertion. I have read in them that there are 10,000 Catholic millionaires in America, that the late King George V was a secret Catholic, that 50 per cent. of the American soldiers in the War were Catholics, and Catholics run 50 per cent.—the correct figure is 8·5 per cent.—of the hospitals in America. Even Catholics sometimes complain of the blatant vulgarity with which they boast that some pugilist or baseball-player or cinema-actress of the first rank is “one of us.”

Instead, however, of attempting to analyse the mental attitude of different classes, I will draw attention to two points. One is the appalling cultural poverty of the American Catholic Church, and the other is the high percentage of criminals it provides. No country in the world has so many able men of science, sociologists, historians, and economists as America, on account of its vast wealth and population, but not one of them of any distinction belongs to the Catholic Church. As in England, the few well-known men Catholics claim in the field of culture are literary men, who are farthest removed from exact thinking and adequate positive knowledge. “There are,” says a Catholic writer, Arthur Preuss, “more intelligent leaders among the 3,000,000 Catholics of Ireland [!], and even among the 2,000,000 Catholics of England than among the 21,000,000 of the United States.” This was painfully confirmed by two professors who analysed the religious beliefs of the 30,000 distinguished Americans whose names

are given in *Who's Who*. Unitarians—who in America do not in a large number of cases profess to be theists—had 1185 per 100,000 of their body in the list. Catholics had just the same number as the despised Fundamentalists, 7 per 100,000, and many of these were merely Church dignitaries or politicians.

On the other hand, Catholics are appallingly numerous in the criminal population. A Catholic chaplain of the famous New York jail, Sing Sing, gave in the Catholic weekly, *The Commonweal* (December 14th, 1932), an analysis of the religious professions of the inmates. In a total of 1581 men no less than 855 declared themselves Catholics. Only eight said that they had no religion. And whatever advantage there may be to a convicted criminal in professing some religion, there is no special advantage in choosing the Catholic ticket. We know, in fact, that this is a general situation throughout the English-speaking world. My friend Sir Robert Stout, late Lord Chief Justice of New Zealand, had a similar analysis, with the same result, made of the inmates of New Zealand jails, and when I discussed the subject with him in Wellington, he gave me a copy of it which I have published elsewhere.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOW ENGLISH CATHOLICS ARE DUPED

**M**OST of my readers will reflect when they reach this page that such a chapter as this seems superfluous. It will appear to them, and rightly, that English Catholics cannot know a tithe, even a hundredth part, of the facts I have given in the preceding twelve chapters. To this the Catholic may not unreasonably reply that these facts are, on the whole, no more known to the general public than to himself. A Catholic, he will submit, is at least free to read any daily and weekly paper or papers he chooses, and if these have not told him the full truth about contemporary happenings, one must address one's reproaches to them. A sound point—if his Church were not responsible for the suppression of material facts. But that, and the worse perversion of known facts in Catholic literature than in general literature, are just the points we make against the Church in this country.

I do not weaken my case by straining my eyes in the dark vaults of politics to discover disguised Jesuits or Papal emissaries, so I have nothing to say about Vatican politics in this country. Since the Irish question was put beyond the sphere of our interest, the Vatican has little ground for making the kind of bargain it used to make. Certainly there is interference in the political world. It is, for instance, an open secret in the Labour Movement that the resolution in favour of Secular Education which used to be passed by very large majorities at each annual Trades

Union Congress was struck off the agenda at the dictation, through Catholic members, of the Catholic clergy. There are reports, too, of secret negotiations before elections about "the Catholic vote"; though the Catholic body is now so mixed in the political sense that one would not be disposed to attach much importance to these. The Church does not meddle in politics—where it has no power to do so. In countries like England its policy is to protect its own people from the impact of truths which are causing the world at large to drift disdainfully away from all mediæval traditions, to mitigate the hostility of outsiders by a false representation of Church Law and aims, and—since the clergy themselves know that the "conversions" they make are far less annually than the secessions they must deplore—to maintain a full Catholic birth-rate in a world that is generally compelled to adjust its birth-rate to the rapid reduction of its death-rate and to trust to this to secure in time a considerable growth of the Catholic proportion. I have illustrated this in the case of America, and a few words will suffice for this country.

### § I. *Catholic Truth*

Many friends of mine regret that I use such language as "duped" and "mendacity" in criticisms of Roman Catholic life and literature. In regard to the latter word I confess to some difficulty. I received, for instance, a few months ago a newspaper from the West Indies containing an article in which the local Catholic oracle explained to the general public, in reply to a question, that as an historical authority I have been fully exposed and discredited. Since no Catholic ever replied either to my *True Story of the Roman Catholic Church* (a history of the Church in three good-sized volumes) or any other of thirty or forty historical works of mine, I wondered. But my

correspondent pressed the priest for detail, and all that he could reply was that *thirty-three years earlier* I had, in a totally unimportant phrase in my *Haeckel's Critics Answered* (1903), given the name Lacordaire instead of that of some other French preacher ! There are hundreds of thousands of statements in my historical works, since they run to millions of words, yet because some Jesuit more than thirty years ago noticed this trivial lapse of memory, the statement is still made repeatedly—I have had it from India, Australia, and America—that my historical works have been exposed and discredited by scholars. What is one to call that ? It is deliberate deception of the public.

The serious point is that this practice pervades the whole of Roman Catholic apologetic literature to an extent that is unsuspected by those outsiders who have not had occasion to examine it critically. In a small popular work (*The Popes and their Church*) I showed that on one single point, the supremacy of the Popes in the early Church, even what is regarded as the most solid and scholarly work in Catholic literature, the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, repeats a hundred grossly unhistorical statements which have been refuted and exposed over and over again. I could fill a large volume with statements from that Encyclopædia which every competent non-Catholic student of history or science would acknowledge to be false and long since exposed as such. In popular Catholic literature, such as the pamphlets and booklets issued by the "Catholic Truth Society," the standard of accuracy—if you insist on the word—is lower than in any other literature in the world.

People who wonder whether it is not prejudice against a particular Church that moves one to make such statements—one generally finds that these people have never made any critical study of the literature—are themselves

dupes of fraudulent Catholic propaganda. The Catholic writer has a position that no other religious writer in the world enjoys. His readers are bound under the strictest obligation to abstain from reading any writers who differ from him or criticize the Church or Catholic literature. This is not only plainly stated in the latest version of Canon Law, which even forbids a Catholic to discuss religion with critics, but the clergy sternly enforce it. Sermons constantly warn the faithful against "bad books" or "books against faith or morals" and remind them that the penalty is eternal punishment. It was, as I showed, one of the Pope's open demands from Mussolini in 1929 that Italian law shall suppress all treatment of religion, orally or in print, that might "mislead the good faith of the less enlightened." This censorship, he insists, is a living part of the law of the Church which Italy has accepted.

In England the preacher does not care to appeal to Canon Law. Such references might not only lead to frivolous inquiries by critics of the Church, but they might, and now often do, cause the Catholic himself to perceive that he is put under a disability of a humiliating character—to ask his Protestant friend to read a Catholic work and then admit that he cannot read a Protestant work without permission of his confessor—solely on the ground of a priest-made law. His next step will be to perceive that the priests made the law in their own interest and to protect an untruthful literature. The preacher, therefore, puts on a common level the reading of indecent and critical literature. One endangers a Catholic's virtue, the other his faith; and it is a "mortal sin," incurring eternal damnation, deliberately to run either risk. A few months ago a Catholic girl, stung by this law of her Church, got a friend to ask me to lend her one of my books. Her

mother saw it and called the priest, and he put my book on the fire before the girl's eyes. As a rule, however, the priest's work is easy. The enormous majority of Catholics have no desire to read serious literature.

### § 2. *The Comical Cost of a Canonization*

There are, however, times when the greed of the Vatican rudely disturbs the working of this profitable system. It is true that to-day the Vatican is better informed about foreign lands and less clumsy in its interferences than it was in the last century. The Catholic writers London and Pichon give, in the course of their eulogy of the Vatican which I have quoted in an earlier chapter, an amusing illustration of the real crudeness of Roman international diplomacy in what Catholic propaganda represents as the great days of Pope Leo XIII. The Pope was told by muddle-headed French priests that the English church was ripe for "corporate reunion," and that Cardinal Vaughan held up that glorious event by quibbling about such trifles as the validity of Anglican Orders. He summoned Vaughan to Rome and scolded him severely, and when Vaughan at last succeeded in making plain to him that even the High Church minority would not for a moment accept the dogma of Papal supremacy and infallibility, the Pope naïvely exclaimed: "Ma questa è una questione di dottrina" (But this is a question of doctrine).<sup>1</sup>

Lord Halifax, the pious promoter of the scheme on the English side, later had "conversations" on the matter with Cardinal Mercier at Malines and knelt humbly for the Cardinal's blessing. I knew Mercier well during my year at Louvain for oriental languages and philosophy. What he really thought, as he told me, about some of the chief Catholic dogmas would have made Lord Halifax shudder.

<sup>1</sup> *Le Vatican et le Monde Moderne*, p. 395.

It was understood that the Vatican had passed beyond this crude stage, and was acquiring the "wisdom" with which it has been so lavishly credited, but in 1928 English Catholics had a severe shock. Most readers will remember the quarrel about Malta, but Catholic influence secured that it should not be too plainly explained to the public. Malta is one of the territories which Mussolini openly, in his Fascist literature, includes in his programme of future annexations. There was, therefore, peculiar significance in the quarrel. A Franciscan monk was ordered by his superiors to go to Italy. Being a Maltese subject and knowing what was in store for him, he appealed to the authorities, and the Catholic governor, Lord Strickland, refused him a passport; as, of course, he wished. The Vatican demanded the recall of Lord Strickland and, when it was refused, directed the Maltese clergy to wreck the peace of the island. At the election in 1930, the clergy made it a mortal sin (hell) for any Maltese to vote for a candidate of the Strickland party, and, as Strickland found and made public, they compelled Catholics to say in the Confessional how they had voted. Lord Strickland was eventually recalled.

But an even more painful strain was imposed upon the loyalty of English Catholics in connection with the recent canonization of Thomas More; and it is a remarkable illustration of that Catholic censorship of our Press about which I warned the reader that, as far as I could discover, no English paper has ever referred to these astonishing facts. All our papers described the ceremony of saint-making with the gratifying respect which is now shown to everything Catholic—the devil's advocate and the proof of miracles were not mentioned—and we had the customary photographs of the gorgeous ceremony, with a ring of Italian cardinals round the Pope, at Rome. It was from



first to last intended as just a particularly good piece of publicity for the Church, as the canonization of Joan of Arc, at which most educated Frenchmen smiled, had been in France.

But the joy of the English clergy was short-lived. It is, of course, understood that national branches of the Church must pay for these profitable pyrotechnic displays at the Vatican, but there was consternation in London when the final bill came and it amounted to £17,000 : £13,000 for the expenses of the canonization and £4000 for a souvenir, a gold chalice, for the Pope. Everybody connected with the Vatican had dipped into the British pocket. The Italian cardinals had fixed in advance their fees for adorning the ceremony with their presence. The prelates and priests from England were elbowed aside until they complained, and then one of their number was permitted—for a fee of £5—to hold a candle during the ceremony. The good little nuns of South London, who have not much to spare, had begged to be allowed to make the personal present to the Pope. They were in tears when they found that they had presented him with a block of solid gold—the chalice would, of course, be melted down—at a time when gold was at its highest level. The facts were kept as far as possible from the laity, though nervous appeals for contributions had to be inserted in the Catholic Press, but the greed of the Vatican made a more painful impression on the hierarchy and clergy than anything that has happened for many years.

### § 3. *Our Catholic Dictators*

I have given in the course of this book so many facts which have clearly been excluded from our Press by Catholic influence that little need be said on this point. The Big-Business system has been borrowed from the

American Church ; and it is, I may add, being adopted by the Dutch and other Catholics. I quoted Mr. Heywood Broun, a very respected New York journalist of the higher type, protesting in the *Nation* (May 9th, 1928) that " there is not a single New York editor who does not live in terror of this group." Our editors might repudiate the charge of terror, but they have a very lively apprehension of printing something that is " offensive to Catholics."

Mr. J. W. Poynter, who actually worked in this section of Catholic activity for years and left the Church in disgust, exposes the tyranny in his *Rome at Close Quarters*. Not only editors, he says, but " publishers were approached wholesale, with threats or inducements to alter their books " (p. 95). I have had painful experience of it. One of our leading novelists some twenty years ago dedicated one of his stories to me, and the publisher insisted on the removal of that page. Some years later I signed the biggest and most profitable contract of my literary career, and, though the work had nothing whatever to do with any religion, the Catholic organization threatened to boycott the publishers throughout Great Britain, and I was compelled to retire with slight compensation. Booksellers are, to my knowledge, similarly bullied. Attempts have been made to get halls refused to me for lectures (not on Catholicism) by threats of a riot, and even my life has been threatened.

It is under this heading of " offensive to Catholics " that facts which the public ought to know are suppressed, and entirely false views of the Vatican and the Church as an ecclesiastical corporation are maintained. Papers, books, libraries, even cinemas and broadcasting are used to give superficially impressive news about Catholic matters, but the moment some truth that would disturb the impression is mentioned there are discreet, sometimes open, threats

of injury to circulation or other mischief. One very important instance of this manipulation of public instruction is so easily verified that I need not do more than quote it. On August 9th, 1929, a lengthy notification by the Westminster Catholic Federation appeared in the "Agony Column" of the *Times*. It said that the Federation had learned that its report (in its Annual Report) of its activity in preparing the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* had been misunderstood. It now denies that it had "any influence whatever upon the editing of the *Encyclopædia*." It merely offered the editor its assistance in checking "certain errors of date and other facts regarding the teaching and discipline of the Catholic Church." Any reader with leisure who cares to compare articles which Catholics do not like in all earlier editions with the articles in the last edition will find that this statement is false. Correct statements of fact have been suppressed or attenuated in large numbers.<sup>1</sup>

And who are these followers of the Pope who dictate to us in the interest of his clerical corporation? Their own claim is merely that they are about one-twentieth of the population, and the claim is, as usual, greatly inflated. Of the 8,000,000 members of all Churches in England, as determined by a recent Committee of the Church of England, they claim 2,335,890, or more than one-fourth; and they have only one-seventh of the ministers of religion in the country! I have given an illustration of the way in which they compile their lists. And there are other peculiar features of the statistics given in their annual

<sup>1</sup> The last to come to my notice is typical. A correspondent asked me on what authority I had written that youths were castrated for the Papal choir until about the end of the nineteenth century. The *Britannica* (article "Eunuch") had given the well-known facts as a matter of course until the last edition, but they have now been cut out and a totally wrong impression given.

*Directory.* If one compares these figures with the national statistics in the *Statesman's Year Book*, one sees that they claim to be little more than one-twentieth of the total population, yet the pupils in their schools, the births (since all are baptized), and the marriages are *one-tenth* of the national total. The inference is clear. There are millions of seceded Catholics who nevertheless marry in Catholic churches and let the children go to Catholic schools. Their genuine total is nearer one and a half than two millions.

As to their quality, we say exactly the same as we said of America. Of distinguished representatives of solid culture—science, history, or philosophy—they have, not one-twentieth, but none; for the Jesuit interest in astronomy is of a propagandist nature. I have taken the trouble to run over the first one-fifth of the names in the *Catholic Who's Who*. Science is represented by one Belgian and one Irishman who are unknown to the public: history by Mr. Belloc. As in America and France, they boast loudly of the conversions of a few men of the type least fitted to judge such matters—literary artists—and their *Who's Who* is, otherwise, the book that more than any other merits the title of the Book of Snobs. This is the Church that is permitted to use our organs of public instruction in its own interest, and for the last ten years it has used that influence to prevent the public from understanding aright the fatal movements of our age because the Vatican is criminally implicated in their worst developments. No one wants to persecute their Church. No one does persecute it. But such is its sinister activity that it can return to its old policy of torturing humanity in its own interest, yet persuade English and American Catholics that it is "bitterly persecuted."

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